STEPHEN LEACOCK

# SHORT Circuits

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Introduction: D. J. Dooley

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# ✻ *Introduction*

Leacock's biographer Ralph Curry writes that *Short Circuits* was strongly (and adversely) affected by the death of Leacock's wife in 1925. Certainly an elegiac note is to be heard many times in the volume; for example, there are several references to Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," and the Epilogue contains an adaptation of it. Furthermore, nostalgia pervades the book. The separate pieces in it are supposedly linked by the theme of short circuits, failures, or breakdowns suggested by the title – short circuits in education, in international affairs, in the social current, and so on – but the dominant motif is really the one singled out by Leacock himself:

> If this book has in it any general theme, it is the contrast between yesterday and to-day, between to-day and tomorrow; the contrast between the life of the past and the life of the future.

Nor is the contrast in the aspect of life alone. The circumstance and setting of even Death itself has altered. When he writes, "We've spoilt this poor old globe," he seems to mean it. His "child and citizen of our time," John Mutation Smith, is the first of his family for generations not to marry the appropriate Abigail and remain in contented wedlock with her; he leads a pathetic life and grows thoroughly sick of the age in which he lives. Of course when Leacock sets the present against the past, he does not cast a romantic glow over the earlier period and forget its shortcomings. In "The Lost World of Yesterday" he describes all the advantages of horse-and-buggy transportation but cannot resist a humorous overstatement of its perils:

> The spin in the horse and buggy as compared with the modern motor car . . . was safety itself. The horse might dash into a snake fence and hurl the girl over it on to a pile of stones in the fence corner; but without damage – you couldn't hurt those girls in 1880.

Still in many of the selections in this volume he is making a protest against mechanization, systematization, efficiency, and a "modern" outlook and deploring the contemporary disregard for basic human needs.

Characteristically, he finds something humble, homely, and concrete by which to illustrate the alteration in man's environ-

ment and perspective. Invited to admire a charming modern apartment with all the latest gadgets, including up-to-the-minute garbage disposal equipment, he remains stubbornly unenthusiastic. "Where's the back yard?" he asks. There isn't one. But, they say, there is a community playroom with mechanical rocking horses and an imitation grass plot made of rubber. He is adamant; there is no substitute for a back yard: "Where's the rain barrel? How do you get soft water for washing? Where's the board fence for the cats to sit on? How can you grow prize burdocks if you haven't got a flower bed?" His attitude is that of the man who remains unmoved in the face of the symbols of contemporary sophistication; his function, apparently, is to remind people of the value which they have always attached to things which they are now thoughtlessly sacrificing to the demon of progress.

Naturally Leacock approaches the new communications media with an eye to their comic possibilities. He is writing in the early days of radio, and he establishes that it squawks and that it is hard to keep its controls properly adjusted; but he does not succeed particularly well with it. His account of the Battle of Hastings as a football announcer would have given it hardly rivals Ronald Knox's famous spoof (practically contemporaneous) of a BBC announcer describing the advance of an unruly mob on Broadcasting House itself; there is humour in the contrast between mediaeval and modern, particularly in the application of mediaeval locutions to a modern invention, but the piece as a whole does not come off. Leacock is much better when he comes to the movies – as when he describes the bewilderment of consultants reporting on the film potential of the story of Adam and Eve, and finding the main characters well up to the standard of motion pictures, but being mystified by the lack of subordinate characters; or when the same experts disapprove of *The Merchant of Venice* because it hasn't enough Americans in it; or when we are allowed to read the captions from the film version of *Hamlet,* in which Ophelia is not drowned but only gets muddy and the King, his wicked ways abandoned, begs forgiveness of his nephew with the immortal words, "We didn't understand one another, Ham."

If the movies are distorting, simplifying, and sentimentalizing the classics, current fiction also reflects a cultural decline, in Leacock's view. E. M. Forster charged in *Howards End* that life was being melted down all over the world; individuality was being surrendered to cosmopolitanism, so that eventually there

would be nothing in the world except standardized rootless unpersons. With something of the same idea in mind, Leacock contends that the widening of the writer's audience will lead to his eliminating all individuating traits in his characters so that there will be no possibility of his giving offense to anybody. Consequently when Leacock gives a character sketch of a typical heroine, Margaret Overproof, whose mouth a critic might have thought a trifle wide though a horse-buyer would have considered it satisfactory, he makes her neither short nor tall and has her convey both an impression of commanding height and an impression of being sawed off. By exaggeration, he makes his point: the international mind will have made so many compromises and lost so many of its attachments that it will be an empty mind.

This type of *reductio ad absurdum* is one of Leacock's favourite techniques; he uses it often in *Short Circuits*. He ridicules the Channel-swimming craze, for example, by looking forward to the day when swimming the Atlantic has become so commonplace that a German lands in New York carrying a large cargo at much less than the usual shipping rate. The looting of European art and historical objects by wealthy Americans receives much the same sort of treatment; eventually, when all the art has been removed, the Americans will start on buildings and places, so that there will be letters to the *Spectator* complaining that the battlefield of Waterloo can no longer be found (it will have gone west) and steamer loads of Britons will be making tours of the United States so that they can have a look at Westminster Abbey and Edinburgh Castle.

As these examples show, the exaggeration is accompanied by a shift from the perspective usually adopted for the objects under examination. Perhaps the best example of this type of alteration occurs in Leacock's discussion of stamp collecting. We have often heard it praised not for itself but for the amount of incidental information, chiefly about history and geography, which its devotee acquires. Leacock takes these solemn justifications at their face value; he begins not by minimizing the importance of philately but by stressing its extraordinary significance: "The Earth, the Globe, on which we collect stamps, is organized by the International Postal Union, which divides it up into countries. The Postal Union turns on its axis every twenty-four hours, thus creating day and night." Once he has taken this humorous point of view, Leacock exploit its possibilities by evaluating nations and individuals in terms of their

philatelic interest: "The principal countries of the world are Cochin-China, the Gilbert Islands, Somali Land . . . Alongside of these great stamp areas are others of less importance, whose stamps are seldom if ever worth more than four cents, such as the United States, Great Britain, Canada, France, etcetera." When it is subjected to humorous appraisal, what the stamp collector has learned about the world turns out to be very curious indeed.

Whereas sometimes the humour depends upon a distorted or grotesque point of view, sometimes it turns on one or more grotesque or incongruous words. Thus Leacock describes the miseries of a masculine author trying to portray a heroine to a predominantly feminine audience. Devoted followers of the fashion magazines, they "want to know what she really had on, and won't be put off with that clinging stuff." So he has to go into details:

> As Lois gaily slid down the banisters of the staircase, her appearance attracted all eyes. She wore a dainty georgette of limousine tucked over a brassière of deep blue and held in place with a ceinture of alligator hide with crystalline insertions.

In such passages, Leacock perhaps indicates a debt to Mark Twain; in fact he plays about with the word *oesophagus* in *Short Circuits*, reminding us of that beautiful descriptive passage in which Twain has a solitary oesophagus winging its way through the blue of the sky.

Leacock resembles Twain also in deliberately cultivating the attitude of the man of the people, the average man who is suspicious of anything highbrow or high-faluting and who is defeated by any kind of complexity. So we find this professor of economics and political science referring to someone, early in the book, as an ordinary plain man just like the rest of us. He writes about a good many familiar, folksy situations, such as that of the wife who always stops her husband just as he is launching into his favourite story, or the man in the Pullman car who is an authority on everything under the sun, or the Americans who go abroad and meet no one except other Americans. On the other hand, his version of a Boy Scout hike is a very sophisticated one, with Old Men Scouts furnished with plenty of cigars and soda water and accompanied by their chauffeurs, each carrying a hundred-and-fifty-pound pack of creature comforts for the Old Scouts. An equal degree of sophistication is found in the instructions for building a bookcase: find out where you can buy

boards cut the right length, send your chauffeur out to get them, and then advertise for a carpenter. And the amusing sketch of "How to Borrow Money" is written by a man who knows enough about financial matters to describe how an international loan of gigantic proportions can be "funded, equated, spread out over fifty years, capitalized, funded again" until it has passed beyond all recognition.

In several of the pieces, Leacock (or the *persona* he employs) appears to be rather cynical about human nature. "How agreeable we are when we are forced to be" is his comment at one point. It is a reflection on the extraordinary degree of solicitude shown to him by a chronic borrower. Yet Leacock shows no desire to have the man become aware of his hypocrisy and mend his ways. Far from it; he would not have him different from what he is. Also when he writes about the reporter who interviews him after a lecture and caricatures what he says, he is much more tolerant than we might expect him to be. Somehow or other, from the statement "I was speaking of our advanced knowledge of radiation emanations and the light it throws on the theory of atomic structure" the reporter gets a story headed "Thinks Aldermen Pack of Bums." Yet the lecturer does not complain:

> Am I resentful? I should say not. Didn't he say that there was a "capacity audience" when really there were only 68 people; didn't he "punctuate the lecture with applause," and animate it with keen attention? What more can a lecturer want?

In both of these parables, an unexpected twist curtails the satiric spirit and replaces it by a calm acceptance. Here Leacock justifies J. B. Priestley's characterization of his satiric humour as that of a very shrewd but essentially good-natured and eupeptic man who is anything but an angry reformer.

But in one part of the book the attitude is somewhat puzzling. The "Elegy Near a City Freight Yard" perhaps demonstrates that Leacock would never have made a poet, but it is still interesting for its treatment of the subject. For Gray's graveyard with its rugged elms and yew tree's shade Leacock substitutes a Funeral Parlour Open Day or Night, for the "rude forefathers," the Decent People who lived near the railway tracks, and for the boast of heraldry and pomp of power, the supercilious residents of the Upper Town. Like Gray he emphasizes that death overtakes rich and poor alike, and that no pomps or ceremonies can minimize its significance. But in his version of the poem it is hard to tell which prevails – humour or the tears of things. His feeling for the common man is evident enough, but what

emotion is strongest in his concluding wry promise to join the Decent People, as soon as he has settled his affairs, at the crematorium? Perhaps the subject is too close, because of the death of his wife; his own feelings destroy his detachment and prevent him from keeping up his role of kindly humorist.

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# SHORT CIRCUITS IN THE SOCIAL CURRENT

## ✻ *Old Junk and New Money*

### A LITTLE STUDY IN THE LATEST ANTIQUES

I WENT the other day into the beautiful home of my two good friends, the Hespeler-Hyphen-Joneses, and I paused a moment, as my eye fell on the tall clock that stood in the hall.

"Ah," said Hespeler-Hyphen-Jones, "I see you are looking at the clock – a beautiful thing, isn't it? – a genuine antique."

"Does it go?" I asked.

"Good gracious, no!" exclaimed my two friends. "But isn't it a beautiful thing!"

"Did it ever go?"

"I doubt it," said Hespeler-Hyphen-Jones. "The works, of course, are by Salvolatile – one of the really *great* clockmakers, you know. But I don't know whether the works ever went. That, I believe, is one way in which you can always tell a Salvolatile. If it's a genuine Salvolatile, it won't go."

"In any case," I said, "it has no hands."

"Oh, dear, no," said Mrs. Jones. "It never had, as far as we know. We picked it up in such a queer little shop in Amalfi and the man assured us that it never had had any hands. He guaranteed it. That's one of the things, you know, that you can tell by. Charles and I were terribly keen about clocks at that time and really studied them, and the books all agreed that no genuine Salvolatile has any hands."

"And was the side broken, too, when you got it," I asked.

"Ah, no," said my friend. "We had that done by an expert in New York after we got back. Isn't it exquisitely done? You see, he has made the break to look exactly as if some one had rolled the clock over and stamped on it. Every genuine Salvolatile is said to have been stamped upon like that.

"Of course, our break is only imitation, but it's extremely well done, isn't it? We go to Ferrugi's, that little place on Fourth Avenue, you know, for everything that we want broken. They have a splendid man there. He can break anything."

"Really!" I said.

"Yes, and the day when we wanted the clock done, Charles and I went down to see him do it. It was really quite wonderful, wasn't it, Charles?"

"Yes, indeed. The man laid the clock on the floor and turned it on its side and then stood looking at it intently, and walking round and round it and murmuring in Italian as if he were swearing at it. Then he jumped in the air and came down on it with both feet."

"Did he?" I asked.

"Yes, and with such wonderful accuracy. Our friend Mr. Appin-Hyphen-Smith – the great expert, you know – was looking at our clock last week and he said it was marvelous, hardly to be distinguished from a genuine *fractura*."

"But he did say, didn't he, dear," said Mrs. Jones, "that the better way is to throw a clock out of a fourth story window? You see, that was the height of the Italian houses in the Thirteenth Century – is it the Thirteenth Century I mean, Charles?"

"Yes," said Charles.

"Do you know, the other day I made the silliest mistake about a spoon. I thought it was a Twelfth Century spoon and said so and in reality it was only Eleven and a half. Wasn't it, Charles?"

"Yes," said Charles.

"But do come into the drawing room and have some tea. And, by the way, since you are interested in antiques, do look please at my teapot."

"It looks an excellent teapot," I said, feeling it with my hand, "and it must have been very expensive, wasn't it?"

"Oh, not *that* one," interposed Mr. Hespeler-Hyphen-Jones. "That is nothing. We got that here in New York at Hoffany's – to make tea in. It *is* made of solid silver, of course, and all that, but even Hoffany's admitted that it was made in America and was probably not more than a year or so old and had never been used by anybody else. In fact, they couldn't guarantee it in any way."

"Oh, I see," I said.

"But let me pour you out tea from it and then do look at the perfect darling beside it. Oh, don't touch it, please, it won't stand up."

"Won't stand up?" I said.

"No," said Hespeler-Jones, "that's one of the tests. We know from that that it is genuine Swaatsmaacher. None of them stand up."

"Where did you buy it?" I asked, "here?"

"Oh, heavens, no, you couldn't buy a thing like that here! As a matter of fact, we picked it up in a little gin shop in Obehellandam in Holland. Do you know Obehellandam?"

"I don't," I said.

"It's just the dearest little place, nothing but little wee smelly shops filled with most delightful things – all antique, everything broken. They guarantee that there is nothing in the shop that wasn't smashed at least a hundred years ago."

"You don't use the teapot to make tea," I said.

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Hespeler-Jones as she handed me a cup of tea from the New York teapot. "I don't think you could. It leaks."

"That again is a thing," said her husband, "that the experts always look for in a Swaatsmaacher. If it doesn't leak, it's probably just a faked-up thing not twenty years old."

"Is it silver?" I asked.

"Ah, no. That's another test," said Mrs. Jones. "The real Swaatsmaachers were always made of pewter bound with barrel-iron off the gin barrels. They try to imitate it now by using silver, but they can't get it."

"No, the silver won't take the tarnish," interjected her husband. "You see, it's the same way with ever so many of the old things. They rust and rot in a way that you simply cannot imitate. I have an old drinking horn that I'll show you presently – Ninth Century, isn't it, dear? – that is all coated inside with the most beautiful green slime, absolutely impossible to reproduce."

"Is it?" I said.

"Yes, I took it to Squeeziou's, the Italian place in London. (They are the great experts on horns, you know; they can tell exactly the country and the breed of cow.) And they told me that they had tried in vain to reproduce that peculiar and beautiful rot. One of their head men said that he thought that this horn had probably been taken from a dead cow that had been buried for fifty years. That's what gives it its value, you know."

"You didn't buy it in London, did you?" I asked.

"Oh, no," answered Hespeler-Jones. "London is perfectly impossible – just as hopeless as New York. You can't buy anything real there at all."

"Then where do you get all your things?" I asked, as I looked round at the collection of junk in the room.

"Oh, we pick them up here and there," said Mrs. Jones. "Just in any out-of-the-way corners. That little stool we found at the back of a cow stable in Loch Aberlocherty. They were actually using it for milking. And the two others – aren't they beautiful? though really it's quite wrong to have two chairs alike in the same room – came from the back of a tiny little whiskey shop in Galway. Such a delight of an old Irishman sold them to us

and he admitted that he himself had no idea how old they were. They might, he said, be Fifteenth Century, or they might not.

"But, oh, Charles," my hostess interrupted herself to say, "I've just had a letter from Jane (Jane is my sister, you know) that is terribly exciting. She's found a table at a tiny place in Brittany that she thinks would exactly do in our card room. She says that it utterly unlike anything else in the room and has quite obviously no connection with cards. But let me read what she says – let me see, yes, here's where it begins:

"'. . . a perfectly sweet little table. It probably had four legs originally and even now has two which, I am told, is a great find, as most people have to be content with one. The man explained that it could either be leaned up against the wall or else suspended from the ceiling on a silver chain. One of the boards of the top is gone, but I am told that that is of no consequence, as all the best specimens of Brittany tables have at least one board out.'

"Doesn't that sound fascinating, Charles? Do send Jane a cable at once not to miss it."

. . . . .

And when I took my leave a little later, I realized once and for all that the antique business is not for me.

## ✻ "*Speaking of India*——"

### WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR HUSBAND TELLS IN COMPANY HIS SAME OLD STORY

I WAS at a dinner party the other night at which one of the guests, as guests generally do, began to tell an old story of his, already known to us all.

"What you say of India," he said, "reminds me of a rather remarkable experience of mine in California——"

"Oh, James," interrupted his wife, "please don't tell that old story over again."

The narrator, a modest man, blushed and came to a stop. There was a painful silence which lasted for some moments. Then somebody said, "Speaking of Mayor Thompson of Chicago——" and the party went on again.

. . . . .

But the incident left behind it a problem in my mind. Should a wife, or should a wife not, interrupt her husband to stop him telling one of his wearisome old stories. . . .

If the husband could speak (most husbands are inarticulate) he could certainly put up a good defense. He could say:

"My dear Martha, you think this is an old story. But if you knew some of the ones that will be told by the other men if I don't tell this, you'd think it brand new. You think the story wearisome for *you*. But their wives think their stories wearisome for *them*. All the stories we are all going to tell tonight are old. Of course they are. What do you think we are, – Shakespeare? We can't sit here and make up *new* stories. If we could, we'd black our faces, call ourselves coons and draw a hundred dollars a night in a New York Revue.

"Moreover – listen to this as a second point. An old story has certain great advantages over a new one. There's no strain in listening to it. You know just when it is all coming, and you can slip in an extra oyster and bite off an extra piece of celery in between the sentences, take a drink of dry ginger ale and be all set for the big laugh at the end.

"And get this also – if you don't have stories at a dinner table somebody will start Statistics. And Statistics are worse than stories in the ratio of eight to one. There is, you must remember, a certain type of man, who goes round filling himself up with facts. He knows how many miles of railway track there are in the United States and the number of illiterates in Oklahoma. At any dinner party this man may be there: if he is, conversation turns into a lecture. Worse still there may be two of these men. If there are, conversation becomes an argument."

. . . . .

Now, this is the worst of all. Argument at a dinner party ruins the whole evening for everybody. One man says something, – let us say, – about the Civil War, – and some one else contradicts him. – "You'll pardon *me*——" he says, and they're off. They start politely. In two minutes they are speaking with warmth. In four minutes they hate one another worse than hell. First they ask themselves to pardon one another. Then they begin referring one another to books. – "Pardon me," says one, "if you consult any history of the war, you'll see that Lincoln *never* meant to set free the slaves." – "Excuse me," says the other, "if you consult any biography of Lincoln you'll see that he *did*. . . ."

Now you notice that this point about Abraham Lincoln can't be settled without at least a year's work in a library – and not even then.

So the argument gets warmer. The opponents refer one another to books, then they tell one another to go to Washington and hunt it up for themselves. Finally they tell one another to go to hell.

Meantime there is a maid behind one of them trying to give him a creamed celery out of a dish which he keeps knocking over, and a maid pouring hot asparagus with drawn butter over the other one's shirt front.

And the dinner party is a failure. Those two men will carry their quarrel right on after the men are left alone; they'll fetch it up to the library, they'll keep it all through bridge and take it home with them.

Think how much softer and easier if some one had said, "Talking about California, reminds me of an episode in India." . . . How quietly the asparagus would have circulated then.

. . . . . .

And there is more to it than that. There is, it seems to me, a sort of humble pathos surrounding the gentle story teller wanting to get his little anecdote in, and generally having to try several times for an opening.

He begins among the oysters.

"Speaking of India——" he says. But a wave of general conversation washes over him.

Somewhere in the middle of the fish, there is a lull in the talk and again he says, – "Speaking of India——" "Now you really *must* have some of that fish," interrupts his hostess. And a burst of talk about fish blows his topic into nothingness. He tries next at the roast. "Speaking of India——" he says, and a maid drops gravy over him.

And at last, at the happy last, he gets a real chance. – "Speaking of India," he says, and then his wife breaks in with "Oh! James!"

. . . . . .

Madam, do you think it's fair? It is, of course, a great trial for a brilliant woman like you to have to drag around a husband like him. Of course he's a dud. You ought really to have married either Bernard Shaw or Mussolini.

But you didn't. You just married an ordinary plain man like the rest of us, with no particular aspirations to be a humorist, or a raconteur, or a diseuse, or anything of the sort: anxious just to take some little part in the talk about him.

So, next time, when he begins "Speaking of India——" won't you let us hear what it was that happened there?

# ✻ *How to Borrow Money*

## THE PROCESS IS QUITE EASY, PROVIDED YOU BORROW ENOUGH

HAVE you ever, dear readers, had occasion to borrow money? Have you ever borrowed ten dollars under a rigorous promise of your word of honor as a Christian to pay it back on your next salary day? Have you ever borrowed as much as a million at a time?

If you have done these things, you cannot have failed to notice how much easier it is to borrow ten thousand dollars than ten, how much easier still to borrow a hundred thousand, and that when you come at last to raising an international loan of a hundred million the thing loses all difficulty.

Here below are the little scenes that take place on the occasion of an ascending series of loans.

### TABLEAU NO. I

*The Scene in Which Hardup Jones Borrows Ten Dollars Till the First of Next Month from His Friend, Canny Smith*

"Say, look here, old man, I was wondering whether perhaps you wouldn't mind letting me have ten dollars till the end of the month——"

"Ten dollars'!"

"Oh, I could give it back all right, for dead sure, just the minute I get my salary."

"Ten dollars!!!"

"You see, I've got into an awful tangle – I owe seven and a half on my board, and she said yesterday she'd have to have it. And I couldn't pay my laundry last week, so he said he wouldn't leave it, and I got this cursed suit on the installment plan and they said they'd seize my trunk, and——"

"Say, but Gol darn it, I lent you five dollars, don't you remember, last November, and you swore you'd pay it back on the first and I never got it till away after New Year's——"

"I know, I know. But this is absolutely sure. So help me, I'll pay it right on the first, the minute I get my check."

"Yes, but you won't——"

"No, I swear I will——"

And after about half an hour of expostulations and protests of this sort, having pledged his soul, his body, and his honor, the borrower at last gets his ten dollars.

TABLEAU NO. II

*The Scene in Which Mr. McDuff of the McDuff Hardware Store in Central City (pop. 3,862) Borrows $1,000 from the Local Bank*

The second degree in borrowing is represented by this scene in which Mr. John McDuff, of McDuff Bros. Hardware Store (Everything in Hardware), calls on the local bank manager with a view to getting $1,000 to carry the business forward for one month till the farmers' spring payments begin to come in.

Mr. McDuff is told by one of the (two) juniors in the bank to wait – the manager is engaged for the moment.

The manager in reality is in his inner office, sorting out trout flies. But he knows what McDuff wants and he means to make him wait for it and suffer for it.

When at last McDuff does get in, the manager is very cold and formal.

"Sit down, Mr. McDuff," he says. When they go fishing together, the manager always calls McDuff "John." But this is different. McDuff is here to borrow money. And borrowing money in Central City is a criminal act.

"I came in about that loan," says McDuff.

The manager looks into a ledger.

"You're overdrawn seventeen dollars right now," he says.

"I know, but I'll be getting my accounts in any time after the first."

Then follows a string of severe questions. What are McDuff's daily receipts? What is his overhead? What is his underfoot? Is he a church-goer? Does he believe in a future life?

And at last even when the manager finally consents to lend the thousand dollars (he always meant to do it), he begins tagging on conditions:

"You'll have to get your partner to sign."

"All right."

"And you'd better get your wife to sign."

"All right."

"And your mother, she might as well sign too——"

There are more signatures on a country bank note for one month than on a Locarno treaty.

And at last McDuff, of Everything in Hardware, having pledged his receipts, his premises, his credit, his honor, his wife, and his mother – gets away with the thousand dollars.

### TABLEAU NO. III

*How Mr. P. O. Pingpoint, of the Great Financial House of Pingpoint, Pingpong and Company, New York and London, Borrows a Million Dollars before Lunch*

Here the scene is laid in a fitting setting. Mr. Pingpoint is shown into the sumptuous head office of the president of the First National Bank.

"Ah, good morning," says the president as he rises to greet Mr. Pingpoint, "I was expecting you. Our general manager told me that you were going to be good enough to call in. Won't you take this larger chair? – you'll find it easier."

"Ah, thank you. You're very comfortable here."

"Yes, we rather think this a pleasant room. And our board room, we think, is even better. Won't you let me show you our board room?"

"Oh, thanks, I'm afraid I hardly have the time. I just came in for a minute to complete our loan of a million dollars."

"Yes, our executive Vice-President said that you are good enough to come to us. It is very kind of you, I'm sure."

"Oh, not at all."

"And you are quite sure that a million is all that you care to take? We shall be delighted, you know, if you will take a million and a half."

"Oh, scarcely. A million, I think, will be ample just now; we can come back, of course, if we want more."

"Oh, certainly, certainly."

"And do you want us to give any security, or anything of that sort?"

"Oh, no, quite unnecessary."

"And is there anything you want me to sign while I am here?"

"Oh, no, nothing, the clerks will attend to all that."

"Well, thanks, then, I needn't keep you any longer."

"But won't you let me drive you up town? My car is just outside. Or, better still, if you are free, won't you come and eat some lunch with me at the club?"

"Well, thanks, yes, you're really extremely kind."

And with this, quite painlessly and easily, the million dollars has changed hands.

But even that is not the last degree. Eclipsing that sort of thing, both in case and in splendor, is the international loan, as seen in——

TABLEAU NO. IV

*The Scenes Which Accompany the Flotation of an Anglo-French Loan in the American Market, of a Hundred Million Dollars, by the Right Hon. Samuel Rothstein of England and the Vicomte Baton Rouge de Chauve Souris of France*

This occurrence is best followed as it appears in its triumphant progress in the American press.

NEW YORK, Friday – An enthusiastic reception was given yesterday to the Right Hon. Mr. Samuel Rothstein, of the British Cabinet, and to the Vicomte de Chauve Souris, French plenipotentiary, on their landing from the *Stacquitania*. It is understood that they will borrow $100,000,000. The distinguished visitors expect to stay only a few days.

NEW YORK, Saturday – An elaborate reception was given last evening in the home of Mrs. Bildermont to the Right Hon. Samuel Rothstein and the Baron de Chauve Souris. It is understood that they are borrowing a hundred million dollars.

NEW YORK, Monday – The Baron de Chauve Souris and the Right Hon. Samuel Rothstein were notable figures in the Fifth Avenue church parade yesterday. It is understood that they will borrow a hundred million dollars.

NEW YORK, Tuesday – The Baron de Chauve Souris and the Right Hon. Samuel Rothstein attended a baseball game at the Polo Grounds. It is understood that they will borrow a hundred million dollars.

NEW YORK, Wednesday – At a ball given by Mr. and Mrs. Ashcoop-Vandermore for the distinguished English and French plenipotentiaries, Mr. Samuel Rothstein and the Baron de Chauve Souris, it was definitely stated that the loan which they are financing will be limited to a hundred million dollars.

NEW YORK (Wall Street), Thursday – The loan of $100,000,000 was subscribed this morning at eleven o'clock in five minutes. The Right Hon. Mr. Rothstein and the Baron Baton Rouge de Chauve Souris left America at twelve noon, taking the money with them. Both plenipotentiaries expressed their delight with America.

"It is," said the Baron – "how do you call it? – a cinch."

EPILOGUE

And yet, six months later, what happened? Who paid and who didn't?

Hardup Jones paid $5.40 within a month, $3.00 the next month and the remaining one dollar and sixty cents two weeks later.

McDuff Bros. met their note and went fishing with the manager like old friends.

The Pingpoint Syndicate blew up and failed for ten million dollars.

And the international loan got mixed up with a lot of others, was funded, equated, spread out over fifty years, capitalized, funded again – in short, it passed beyond all recognition.

And the moral is, when you borrow, borrow a whole lot.

## ✻ *Life's Minor Contradictions*

### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THINGS AS THEY ARE AND AS THEY SEEM

Isn't it funny how different people and things are when you know them from what you think they are when you don't know them?

For instance, everybody knows how much all distinguished people differ in their private lives from what they appear to the public. We all get used to being told in the papers such things as that in his *private* life Signor Mussolini is the very gentlest of men, spending his time by preference among children and dolls; that in his *private* life Dean Inge, the "gloomy Dean" of St. Paul's Cathedral, is hilariously merry; and that Mr. Chesterton, fat though he appears in public, is in private life quite thin.

I myself had the pleasure not long ago of meeting the famous Mr. Sandpile, at that time reputed to be the most powerful man in America, and giving public exhibitions of muscular strength of a most amazing character. I was surprised to find that in his private life Sandpile was not a strong man at all, but quite feeble. "Would you mind," he said to me, "handing me that jug? It's too heavy for me to lift."

In the same way, I recall on one occasion walking down a

street in an English seaport town late one night with Admiral Beatty – I think it was Admiral Beatty, either Beatty or Jellicoe. "Would you mind," he said, "letting me walk behind you? I'm afraid of the dark." "You mean of course," I said, "only in your private life." "Certainly," he answered. "I don't mind it a damn in daylight."

Few people know that Mr. Henry Ford cannot drive a motor car, that Mr. Rockefeller never has any money, and that Thomas Edison has never been able to knit.

But lately I have been noticing that these contradictions extend also to institutions and things in general. Take for instance, a circus. In past generations it was supposed by many of the best supposers that circus people were about as tough an "aggregation" as it was possible to aggredge. But not at all. Quite the other way.

Not long ago a circus came to our town and I had the pleasure of spending some time with one of the clowns – he was studying for a Ph.D. in private life – and of getting a good deal of information from him as to what a modern circus is like when seen from the inside.

I expressed my astonishment that he should be a clown and also a Philosophy student. "Not at all," he said, "there's nothing unusual about that. As a matter of fact, four of our clowns are in philosophy, and the ringmaster himself is studying palæontology, though he is still some distance from it. Nearly all our clowns are college men: they seem specially fitted for it somehow.

"And most of our trapeze ladies are college girls. You can tell a college girl on a trapeze at any time. You must come over and see us," he added, "we are having a little sort of gathering on Sunday afternoon – one of our Fortnightly Teas. We generally have a little reading and discussions. We take up some author or period and some one reads a paper on it. This afternoon we are to discuss the Italian Renaissance and the bandmaster is to deal with Benvenuto Cellini.

"We have a welfare Society, and a Luncheon Club, and our Big Sister Movement. As to drunkenness," he added, "the other day some one brought in a bottle of Ontario four per cent beer and our manager was terribly distressed about it. He gave it to the kangaroo."

It seems impossible to doubt the truth of his words, especially when we corroborate them with similar disclosures about other institutions.

Take, for example, some information which I recently re-

ceived in regard to cowboys from a man who had just made a tour in the West.

"You are quite mistaken," he told me, "in imagining that the western cowboy is the kind of 'bad man,' all dressed up in leather fringes, that you read about in the half-dime novels. As a matter of fact, most of the cowboys nowadays are college men. There seems to be something in a college training which fits a man for cattle.

"They are principally law students. Few of the cowboys of today undertake to ride, for of course they don't need to. They mostly use cars in going after the cattle, and many of them, for that matter, can't drive a car. They have chauffeurs. And in any case, the cattle of today are very quiet and seldom move faster than a walk or a run.

"The cowboy has naturally long since discarded his peculiar dress and wears just a plain lounge suit with a thin duster and motor goggles. Of course, they change for dinner at night, especially when invited out to dine with the Indians, or at one of the section men's clubs beside the railway track. But you ought to go out and see them for yourself."

I admitted that I ought.

Meantime I notice the same kind of contradiction in another set of institutions, but this time turned the other way around. I'll give as an example of it the newspaper account of the entertainment (it is an annual affair) that was given in our town the other night under the auspices of the Girls' Uplift Society in aid of the Rescue Fund for Sunken Delinquents.

"The Revue put on last week by the Girls' Uplift Society in the Basement of the Seventh Avenue Social Center certainly outclassed any of the previous performances of the Society. The chorus dancing of the Rescue Squad was pronounced worthy of the Midnight Follies of the metropolis itself, and the pastor in his remarks spoke especially of the trapeze work of the Mothers' Aid.

"The pastor drew attention, however, to the fact that this year more than ever there had been complaints about the young ladies bringing flasks to their dressing rooms. He himself – he admitted it reluctantly – had not seen any of these flasks and could not speak of the contents. But the janitor had picked up twenty-six. He himself, however, had looked all round the basement, but had failed to find any.

"He deplored also the increasing prevalence of smoking at the performances. He himself saw no harm in a good cigar, for himself, especially in a well-seasoned twenty-five-cent dark

Habanana, which he said beat Virgyptian tobacco hands down. But he looked on a cigarette as a mighty poor smoke."

When we add to the disclosures of this sort such minor and obvious facts as that nowadays sailors can't swim, and clergymen swear, and brewers don't drink, and actors can't act – we have to admit that we live in a changing world.

## * *A Great Life in Our Midst*

### JOE BROWN, CHAMPION PIE EATER

One's first impressions of Joe Brown, champion pie-eater, is that of a quiet, unassuming man, of a stature in no way out of the common, and having a frank, offhand manner that puts one at once at one's ease.

"Sit right down," he said to the group of us (we were reporting for the press), and he waved his hand towards the rocking-chairs on the veranda. "Sit right down. Warm, ain't it?"

The words were simple, but spoken with a heartiness and good will that made one at once feel at home. It seemed hard to believe that this was actually the man who had eaten more pie, more consecutive pie, than any other man alive – still alive.

"Well, Joe," we said, getting out our notebooks and pencils, "what about this pie?"

Mr. Brown laughed, with that pleasant, easy laugh of his, which makes one feel entirely reassured.

"I rather supposed you boys were going to talk about the pie," he said.

"Well," we admitted, "all the world is talking about it, Joe. Coming right on top of the news that a man has played golf continually for twenty-four hours and that a woman in Indiana shucked peas for three days, and that the huckleberry record has been broken, that a man in Medicine Hat, Alberta, stood on one leg for seven hours, and that the champion fat boy of Iowa passed four hundred pounds last week, this pie stuff of yours seems to be going over pretty big."

"Yes," said Mr. Brown, quietly, "there are big things being done to-day certainly, and I'm glad to be in it. And yet I don't feel as if I had done anything so very much after all."

"Oh, come, Joe," we expostulated, "in New York they are

saying that your pie act is about the biggest endurance stunt of the month. It puts you, or it ought to, right in the first rank of the big men to-day."

"Well," said the champion modestly, "I'm afraid I can't take too much credit for it. I just did my best, that was all. I wasn't going to let it beat me, and so I just put into it every ounce of pep, or pepsin, that I had."

"What first turned you to eating pie, Joe?" asked one of the boys.

"It's hard to say," he answered. "I think I just took to it naturally. Even as a little fellow, before I understood anything about it, I was fond of pie and liked to see how much I could eat."

"How did it feel when you ate the first slice in the championship?" asked one of the boys.

"No," broke in another, "tell us about your training, Joe – how did you go at that?" "No," said a third, "tell us what was the most trying moment of the whole contest."

The great man laughed. "I'm afraid you boys are asking a whole lot of questions altogether," he said. "But the main facts are simple enough, and, as I see it, nothing so very much to boast about.

"As for the championship contest," he continued, and a look of quiet earnestness came over his face as he spoke, "I can only say, boys, that I'm glad it's over. It was a strain, a great strain. I'll never forget how I felt as we passed the twentieth slice and then the thirtieth and then the fortieth. I said to myself, 'Surely this can't last; there must come a time when it just can't go on.' Something seemed to make me understand that.

"I'd run into a burst of speed from the twentieth up to the thirtieth, with a stroke of two bites to the second, but I saw I couldn't hold the pace; I slowed it down to four bites in five seconds and just hung on to that, till I heard the big shout that told me I had won. After that, I guess I pretty well keeled over. I was all in."

"Were you laid out for long?" some one asked.

"No, just for two or three minutes. Then I went home, had a bath and a rub-down, and got something to eat, and then I felt dandy."

"Is it true you're to go over to the other side, Joe?" asked one of the boys.

"I don't quite know. My manager wants me to go over to England and eat pie there. There are some first-class men in

England, so they tell me, that one would be proud to eat against."

"What about France, Joe?"

"Yes, France, too. The French have got some good men and some fine men. And their technique is better than ours. They're quicker. They've done more so far in jaw movement than we have. If I eat a Frenchman, my only advantage, if I have any at all, will be in endurance."

"Aren't the pie-eating rules in France different, Joe?" asked one of us.

"They were," said the champion. "The French used to allow drinking – up to six gallons – during the contest. As you know, we don't. But now that we have got the International Pie-Eating Association, we expect to have a set of rules the same for everybody."

"Where will you train if you go?" the champion was next asked.

"Most likely," he said, "I'll train at the lunch counters in New York and some of the big cities. But the station restaurants are good too; and I may tackle the cafeterias in some of the big hotels. Anywhere, in short, where I can get speed and atmosphere."

"When do you leave for the other side?" we asked.

"Oh, I can't get away just yet. I have to get my films ready for the moving picture people. I'm eating for them four or five hours a day now, and we're trying out the high-speed pictures."

"What about lectures?"

"Yes, I believe I'm going to give a tour starting next month and going right to the Coast, lecturing on 'Eating in Relation to Food.' "

"Doing anything for the schools, Joe?" some one questioned.

"Yes, I think I'm going to give a talk in a lot of the public schools."

"What about?"

"It will be on 'Food in Relation to Eating,' so you see I can't get away to Europe for a while yet."

We sat thus for over half an hour chatting with this latest and in some ways most interesting of the world's new champions. It seemed wonderful in talking with him to think of the improved attitude of the human race. The old-fashioned interest in wars, battles, economics, and industry is now obviously passing away. It is being replaced by the more human, more vital

interests of eating pie, standing on one leg, and shucking huckleberries.

Looking thus at Mr. Joe Brown, we felt ourselves in the presence of a typical man of the new age.

Presently, however, the champion seemed to show signs of a slight weariness.

"Boys," he said," I guess you'll have to excuse me. I'm beginning to feel kind of hungry. I think I'll go inside and get something to eat."

"What do you generally take as your ordinary diet, Joe?" we asked.

"Pie," he answered.

## ✻ *The Perfect Gift*

### A LITTLE STUDY IN THE ART OF TASTEFUL GIVING

It so happened that a little while ago I was placed under a very considerable obligation to my friend and neighbor MacPherson, and I determined to make him a suitable gift as a small return for his kindness. As it was near Xmas, the idea of a Xmas present seemed both obvious and appropriate.

Now I am one of those who believe that the selection of a gift is not a matter to be lightly undertaken. The mere expenditure of money is of itself nothing; among people who are fairly well-to-do, it is even less. What is needed in a gift is some peculiar appropriateness of time and circumstance, some aptness in the present that shows to the recipient that the donor has not only spent his money, but has also devoted his best thought to the affair in hand. This lends a peculiar kindliness to the deed.

It was while I was busied with reflections of this sort that I realized that I had left the Xmas season go by. I determined to give MacPherson his present at New Year's.

Meantime, it was a source of gratification to me to observe that the excellent fellow's friendliness was in no way altered by the fact that I had given him nothing at Xmas. His greeting, whenever we met upon the street, was as hearty and as unconstrained as ever. It was a further source of gratification to me

to reflect that his New Year's pleasure would be heightened by the receipt of the well-selected gift that I determined to bestow upon him on that date.

I have always had a peculiar feeling towards the advent of a New Year. It seems to me to be a time peculiarly suited to the renewal of old friendships, the confirmation of existing affections, and the strengthening of unbroken ties.

A present at the New Year carries for me this meaning; and it becomes doubly appropriate when accompanied by some well-selected message, some few but eloquent words that convey to the recipient even more than does the gift itself the sentiments of the donor. Such a message, neatly written upon a suitable card or framed perhaps into a neat turn of verse, is something long to be remembered when the gift itself is laid aside.

It was while I was thinking of this message that New Year's Day went past.

The chagrin with which I presently realized this fact soon passed away. After all, there is something slightly banal or ordinary in making gifts at a season of the year when all the world is doing so. For at such a time benevolence becomes a trade and charity itself a tax. I, therefore, decided to defer my gift till the middle of January. This slight lapse of time beyond the so-called holiday season would give, it seemed to me, an added touch of good taste.

This decision, of course,, now gave me plenty of time to look about me, to consider more carefully MacPherson's tastes and to suit my gift to his peculiar predilections. The excellent fellow meanwhile continued on a footing of undisturbed friendliness that made it a source of constant satisfaction to me to reflect on the future gratification that I proposed to confer on him.

But at this point certain unforeseen difficulties arose in the selection of my present. I had practically decided upon a gold watch, the inside of which should contain a brief inscription, either in English or Latin, or perhaps Gaelic, as appropriate to MacPherson's nationality. Indeed, I had virtually decided on Gaelic as having perhaps a richer flavor, an undertone of something not found in the Latin tongue. Such Gaelic phrases as "Hoot, man" or "Come Awa' Wie Ye" or "Just a Wee Dochan-Dorris" have a special appeal of their own.

My intentions in this direction were frustrated. It so happened that in a company where we were both present MacPherson drew forth a gold watch from his pocket for our inspection. "I don't know," he said, "whether I have showed any of you the watch given to me on New Year's as the outgoing

President of the Caledonian Curling Club." "What is the inscription on the back?" asked one of the company. "It is Gaelic," said MacPherson, "and it reads: 'Hoot, man, come awa' wi' ye, and hae a wee doch-an-dorris.' "

I had the same ill-luck, also, with my selection of a fishing-rod, an admirable thing in split bamboo, such as might appeal to the heart of an angler. I had practically bought it and the shopman was about to wrap it up when I was compelled, by a casual remark on his part, to reconsider my purchase. "It is a beautiful rod," he said; "we just sent a mate to it, almost identical, up to the St. Moritz Country Club. They are giving it as a presentation to Mr. MacPherson, their secretary."

It is quite obvious that a present cannot, among people of taste, be allowed to duplicate something also given. I found it necessary therefore to pause and to make inquiries as best I might in regard to MacPherson's belongings. I found him so singularly well equipped that it was difficult to find any article with which he was not already supplied.

It was while I was making these investigations that the middle of January went by.

This, however, proved to be a very fortunate thing. For I discovered that my friend's birthday was to come on the twenty-eighth of February. This would not only afford me a singularly happy occasion for the presentation I wished to make, but would allow me also six weeks of undisturbed reflection.

During this period, however, a further difficulty opened in front of me. I had not up to this point considered what a singularly difficult problem is presented to the donor of a present in the matter of the price that is to be expended on his gift to the recipient. To expend too lavish a sum smacks of vulgarity and display; too small a price betrays the parsimonious thought. I therefore considered it wise to decide beforehand exactly what price would best suit the requirements of perfect taste. My gift could then be adapted to that.

The result of very serious calculation led me therefore to believe that the sum of thirty-seven dollars and fifty cents would coincide to a nicety with the dictates both of generosity and of restraint. I decided on that. But to my chagrin I found that apparently no object presented itself for my selection that corresponded to that amount. The price of $37.50 was exactly the cost of an electric train, but neither that nor a wicker perambulator (also $37.50) seemed appropriate.

So serious was this new dilemma that MacPherson's birthday came and went while I was struggling with it. The good fellow

even invited me on that occasion to a champagne supper at his house, still innocently unaware of how narrowly he had escaped my benefaction.

Meantime, I am waiting for Easter, a season of the year when the bestowal of a gift is accompanied by a feeling of peculiar reverence and piety. My present intention is to give MacPherson a present at Easter. And perhaps I will; on the other hand, perhaps not. I have become so accustomed to being in a state of pleasant expectation over MacPherson's present that I hate to terminate the sensation.

And after all, I am not really so very much concerned about it. MacPherson is only one of a long list of people to whom during the past thirty or forty years I have been intending to give appropriate presents. If these lines should meet the eye, or the eyes, of any of them, will they kindly take the will for the deed?

Or, better still, will they please go down to the fifteen-cent store and pick out anything that they like and charge it to me?

## ✻ *Scenery and Signboards*

### A VISION OF TRAVEL FROM NEW YORK TO WASHINGTON

PASSING through the tunnels and leaving behind us the surging metropolis of New York, we find ourselves traversing the flat, marshy land of Eastern New Jersey, where ONE HUNDRED ROOMS EACH WITH A BATH can be had from $1.50 up. The scenery is not without its charm, the sunken valley of the Hackensack and the Passaic, the waving rushes and meandering streams, suggest to the poetic mind, WHY NOT TRY GRIP-TIGHT GARTERS?

The ground rises, a varied growth of elm and oak replaces the lowland flats, and we find ourselves in the rich farm land of New Jersey filled with FLUID BEEF, which acts directly on the liver. Here HUMPO may be had for breakfast, and mixed with a little VITAMINGO will probably prolong our life for twenty years.

Nor need we do anything further than – seated just where we are in our luxurious club-car – merely remember the name HUMPO, which in any case comes on every packet and without

which the packet is not genuine. Indeed, a simple way is to ask the porter to be good enough to remember HUMPO.

But stop – in our absorption in the view of HUMPO, we have lost an opportunity to BUILD OUR OWN HOME by merely paying a hundred dollars down.

. . . . .

We are passing now through historic country. We do not need our guide-book to tell us that it is through this beautiful farm district of New Jersey that Washington advanced, slowly driving the English before him. He made his way between a big CONDENSED MILK board and a UNIQUE RADIO SET FOR 238 DOLLARS. He picked his steps with evident caution, avoiding COATS AND PANTS FOR MEN OF ALL SIZES, for his trained strategic eye detected an opening between CHOW CHOW PICKLES and MALTED EXTRACT OF CODFISH.

This gap had apparently been overlooked by General Howe, and Washington threw himself into it; a notice on a large board, erected evidently by some historical society, shows that he probably enabled himself to do this by taking exercises on the floor of his bedroom for not more than ten minutes every morning with the new MUSSELBILD APPARATUS, which would have been sent to Washington by mail on receipt of a money-order or which he could have obtained from his local dealer.

The interesting fact in this connection is that the British General Howe, had he known it, could also have secured a MUSSELBILD from *his* local dealer, as they are handled in *all* parts of the country. Had Howe done this and had they both used the SLIDE-EASY SUSPENDERS that are on each side of the line of the American advance, the struggle of the Revolution might have moved up and down without the slightest friction and with no sense of fatigue.

But look, our train is moving into Trenton, one of the most historic spots in America, where we realize with a thrill by looking out the window that if we need a slight tonic we can secure it from any local dealer for nineteen cents. Our swiftly moving train is now rushing along the shores of the Delaware, and we can see the very spot where Washington and his men crossed in the rude December of 1777; we can shrewdly guess from the notices that have been reared to mark the spot that they used NON-SKID CHAINS, which prevented them from skidding or slipping, and that they had at least an opportunity to reserve rooms with or without baths on the American plan.

We realize as our train rushes forward that we are approach-

ing Philadelphia; rooms with baths, breakfast foods, pills, and non-skid garters multiply on every hand. If we decide to buy a COMPLETE NOBBY SUIT, with an extra pair of pants, we are going to have an opportunity to get it. Or should we need, in order to view the historic spots of interest connected with America's first capital, a SIT-SOFT COLLAR, there are men here, local dealers, who will be glad to sell it to us.

. . . . .

We have rushed past the city of the great Franklin (inventor, no doubt, of the Franklin shoe, the Franklin underwear, and the Franklin adjustable monkey-wrench for stout women), and are now speeding through the open country again. Here for a short time the scenery becomes somewhat monotonous: there is nothing on either hand but deep green woods, open meadows filled with hay (of what brand and whether good for breakfast we are not informed), and the rolling hills and shaded valleys of the Appalachian slope.

Now and then in the distance we catch a glimpse of the sea – unadvertised, it appears, and put to no use whatever. We cross on an endless bridge the broad flood of the Susquehanna, an unused river, so far as we can judge, lying in the gloomy sunshine with no touch of color more brilliant than the mere blue of the sky or the poor green of the woods.

. . . . .

The scene improves as we go forward. The notices of the boards are at a little distance now and we cannot read the words, but the pictures still appear. We are passing through a country of bulls. This is, this must be – Washington! With our faces eagerly set to the window, we draw near to the National Capital; the speed of the train somewhat confuses and blurs our vision and mixes the imagery of the scenery together.

But we infer even from our hurried view of the outskirts of the capital that if any bull wants silk hosiery that neither rips nor tears, he is exactly in the right place for it; and that Washington is exactly in the center of the yeast district, the canned soup area, that all the great modern medical inventions such as HUMPO, JUMPO, and ANTIWHEEZE are sold there, and that we can get all the soap we want; – in short, look about us – here are Rooms with Beds at $1.50! Meals à la carte, Suspenders, Garters, Ice Cream in the Block, Radios, Gramophones, Elixers of Life, Funeral Directors Open All Night, Real Estate, Bungalows, Breakfast Foods——

In truth – this is America indeed.

## ✻ *The Life of John Mutation Smith*

### HOW A TYPICAL CITIZEN OF TO-DAY MOVES THROUGH HIS EXISTENCE

John Mutation Smith was one of the Smiths of Mutation, Massachusetts. His family had come over there about three hundred years ago from England. His grandfather had married Abigail Price, of Price's Corners; and so had his great-grandfather; in fact most of the Mutation Smiths had been marrying Abigail Prices for three hundred years.

All of which is immaterial to the present discussion, and is only mentioned by accident. The real point is that John Mutation Smith himself differs from those who preceded him, like any other typical citizen of our own time, and this is the account in brief of his life.

John Smith was born in Boston and in Philadelphia. He was never quite certain on the point, because he was born at about the time when his father and his second wife (he was her first husband; she had as yet never married when she married him) moved from an apartment in Boston to the same apartment in Philadelphia. Young Smith's memories often clung fondly to this house where he was born – or rather, would have done so except that they had torn it down a little later to put up a garage.

But at any rate Smith's parents didn't remain long in this dear old home. They lived for a while in Binghamton, N.Y., and in Oneonta, N.Y., and in Akron, O. Smith often used to look back with longing as he grew older to the dear old homestead in Oneonta where six months of recollections twined themselves around his heart.

The little playmates of those days endeared themselves to him forever – except for the fact that he ceased to remember which were in Oneonta and which in Binghamton and which in Akron. And he forgot their names. Also their faces. But their memory he never lost. As a matter of fact, he met one of them years after selling real estate out in Fargo, North Dakota – at least, it *must* have been one of his childhood's playmates because the man in question had lived in Oneonta (either Oneonta or

Onondaga) at the very time when Mutation Smith was either in Oneonta or Akron. Things like that forge a link between grown men not easily broken, – except that Smith never saw this man again, because he was on his way to Vancouver, B.C.

Smith always remembered the little red school house where he first went to school, though he could never be certain where it was. He recalled too how the patriotic little fellows used to hoist the flag in front of the school on the great days of the year. Only he was never quite sure what flag it was, because for a while his father had worked up in Orangeville (Province of Quebec or Manitoba), and it may have been there. They used to have patriotic speeches and patriotic readings (directed either for or against the United States, Smith never could remember which) on Washington's birthday or Queen Victoria's.

As a matter of fact, it seems that Mutation Smith's father took out papers when he got his job in Canada that made him British, but when he lost his job he took back his papers and got new old ones again; and then it looked as if he would get a job in Mexico, and he took out Mexican ones. So young Smith grew up patriotic, if nothing else. He always said that he was all for his country. Just let him take one look at his papers, he said, to see which it was and he was all for it.

So much was he inclined that way at college and at his lodge meetings, later on, he used to be able to recite "Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled!" with tears in his eyes; and also "The Watch on the Rhine," and "Gunga Din," and "Rise, Japan!" and "Lie Down, China" – all, I say, with tears in his eyes.

But I am anticipating. Smith's father's work in Canada and in Mexico enabled him to get an American education. He went to Cornell University, which became for him for the rest of his life "his dear old Alma Mater." He felt, as most of the Cornell men feel, that his college days there marked an epoch in his life. He seemed, as it were, to go in a boy, and to come out a man. And yet he was not there very long; ten days in fact. There was something wrong with his credit in certain subjects that was not sufficient and the Dean had to remove him. But when they put him out he was a man. The college had done that to him, whether it liked it or not.

Smith always looked back fondly to dear old Cornell. He used to say that there was something in its wonderful situation, overlooking the waters of the Potomac, that appealed to every fiber in him.

After Cornell, Smith was at the University of Chicago for a term, This, too, he said, made another man of him. After that,

he was for two terms at the University of Virginia, a place whose influence and whose beautiful natural site and buildings, laid out, as Smith himself loved to recall, by Stonewall Jefferson himself, made him for the rest of his life a different man; in other words, he came out different from what he would have been if he had stayed the same as he would have been if he had not got different.

Smith's credit in various subjects being insufficient at Virginia, as they had been at Cornell and Chicago, the Dean removed him. This led to his brief stay at Dartmouth, without which – so at least he himself thought – his development would not have been what it was.

Smith went from Dartmouth to the Massachusetts Tech at Boston, as he wanted to get a glimpse of practical mechanical science. He got it and moved to Johns Hopkins to get an inkling of the latest work in astrophysics. He got it and left in two weeks, taking it with him.

Mutation Smith thus became a typical college man of to-day. All through his maturer life, he used to love to talk, often through tears, of his Alma Maters – or rather of his Almas Mater, which is the proper plural. He said a college man should stick up for his Alma Maters, and whenever there was any call for funds for endowment or re-endowment of any of his colleges, Smith often subscribed as much as five dollars at a time.

Meantime Mutation Smith, now mature, rendered a different man five times from what he had been, passed from college into life itself. And now for the first time women came into his life. That is to say, up to now women had never come into it. They had merely moved through it like fish through the meshes of a net. Now they came and stayed.

Smith's experience with them was very different from the life story of his forbears in Massachusetts in this respect. Take the typical case of his grandfather, John Mayflower Smith. He never "met" Abigail Price, who became his wife, because he didn't need to "meet" her. When he was seven years old, he gave Abigail an oyster-shell. After that he made no sign for four years: but Abigail kept the shell.

When he was eleven years old, he gave her a "conversation lozenge," which had a motto written on it in red poison – "*If you love me as I love you, no knife can cut our love in two.*" Abigail kept the lozenge all her life. When John Smith was eighteen, he went with Abigail to a "tea social," in the schoolhouse – and took her home all alone in broad daylight, the

whole four hundred yards to her house. After that, of course, he had to marry her.

They were engaged for two years, during which time Smith went to see Abigail every Sunday from 2 P.M. to 4 P.M., spending most of his time standing with her father looking at the pig-pen. They were both twenty when they were married. They had eight children four boys called John and four girls called Abigail.

John was a good husband to Abigail. He took her once to the Falls and once to Boston. And one day, when she was crying over something, they say he walked right across the room and kissed her. After he died, Abigail never married, but spent the rest of her life talking about him.

But of course none of this kind of thing would apply to John Mutation Smith, the one under discussion. He belonged not to that age, but to this. I have said that women never came into John Mutation Smith's life until after his college days, never in any serious way. There was, of course, a certain element in his life, as in that of the young men of to-day, that suggested the possibility of love. There was, for example, little Janey Doodoo, whom he knew in his first year at college.

He used to take little Janey out in his Ford, and kiss her – a few dozen times at a time – and squeeze her up to about a pressure of eight pounds to the square inch. And Janey would wind herself around him and stroke his hair back and push his ears up and turn his collar crooked. But it was just a boy and girl affair. At least, that was all it seemed, to look at it – just a boy and a girl.

Then there were Nettie Nitty and Nina Nohow and Posie Possum – all girls at college. John took them out sometimes for the afternoon, sometimes for the evening – sometimes, even to the town soda-fountain. Smith used to love to look back later on to this first dawning awakening of affection with the first six girls that he ever loved. There is nothing so beautiful in life as love's young dream, and when it comes six abreast, it is overwhelming.

Still, after all, it amounted to but little. It cost next to nothing, involved no legal consequences, no action in the courts, no mental collapse, and no question of the penitentiary – in short, it was not love.

Reality only came to John Smith in this respect after he left college and went out into the world. It was here, right out in the world, that he married Abigail Price. It was the first time either of the young people had ever been married. They lived

in a tiny apartment and sang and laughed and were happy all day long, for the whole ten days of their marriage.

They might have stayed married ever so long, only John's boss – he had gone into the flour and feed business – wanted him to move to Ypsilanti, Michigan, and Abigail didn't like the name.

So they parted, still friends, while there was yet time. John Smith used to look back to those bright earlier days of the first marriage he ever made with a sigh of regret. Certain things, he used to say, seem only to come once in life; and a first marriage is one of them.

In Ypsilanti, John married Mrs. Thompson – Bessie Thompson. That was, as nearly as he could remember, her name; but it may have been Jessie. The marriage turned out to be an error, a fatal error, one of those life errors that we make in love. Within a month each realized that he, or she, didn't love her, or him. John found himself staring at the blank wall – it seems the only thing to do in that case – and realizing that his life was wrecked.

Mrs. Thompson stared at the other wall.

They parted. And for a long, long time, nearly a year, John Smith remained unmarried. His heart, he said, was numb. He drove out a little in a buggy with one of the local girls. But his heart was numb all the time they were out.

John's business in the flour and feed failed. So he moved away and opened a drug store in Montpelier, Vermont, and then closed the drug store and went into the wholesale and retail cigar business in Topeka, Kansas. And after that he was for a while up in Canada in real estate in Saskatoon, and after that he went into the school book business on Commission in Bangor, Maine, with a side line of patent ginger ale bottle tops.

John always said that he felt the full charm of business life – the joy that so many have felt in founding a business and seeing it grow and expand for perhaps three or four months, before it collapses.

During all these years of his business life, Mutation Smith was married – in fact, several times. But there were no children. The rules of the apartments where they lived never permitted it – except in Saskatoon, but then there were no apartments in Saskatoon.

In the end, John began to grow old. He would sit for hours in the chimney corner, or rather in the gas grate, musing on his past life, thinking of all his birthplaces, and all his playmates, and of each of his first loves, and of the dear old town, each of

the dear old towns, where the old crowd, all the old crowds, could be pictured waiting to welcome him – if he could only sort them out in his mind.

And thinking thus, I imagine that John Mutation Smith, child and citizen of our time, often grew thoroughly sick of the time in which he lived.

Meantime in the merely worldly sense Smith had accumulated a very fair competence. He had done well out of his failures at Ypsilanti and two or three other places, he had had a disastrous fire in Topeka on which he had cleaned up a good deal, and he had incurred a total bankruptcy in Saskatoon that had put him on his feet.

But his heart was sad. He often asked himself what his life had amounted to anyway, and it didn't add up to much.

And now I hear, quite recently – or perhaps I have imagined – a strange thing about John Mutation Smith, namely, that he is about to make a new move in life.

It seems that he met again the other day Abigail Price – the same one of long ago. And Abigail, like all the Abigails, has waited and has never married again.

And they are going to be remarried and are going to go back and settle again in Mutation, Massachusetts, where nothing ever changes. They have bought a frame house with walnut trees in front of it. They are old people now, of course, nearly thirty-six both of them, but it's a large house, such a large house, and there are no rules against children within fifty miles. So perhaps you can't tell.

## ✻ *Inference as an Art*

### HOW EVEN AN AMATEUR MAY FORGE A CHAIN OF LOGIC

I SUPPOSE that there is nothing so fascinating to the human intellect as the following out of a close chain of reasoning – the kind of thing that is called in the detective stories "an inexorable concatenation of logic." Perhaps it is the detective story that has made this kind of thing so fashionable in our generation.

Personally I must say that I like now and then to try my hand

at such an exercise, and to see what conclusions I can draw in regard to the casual people whom I meet or see – a stranger observed on a train or a random passenger on a street-car. No doubt I am not alone in this. I imagine that the attempt to unravel the mystery of our fellow-men in this fashion is a favorite pastime with many of us.

I lay no claim to any particular skill in observation or reasoning power. But I may at least say that interest and industry have brought to me what might seem a rather surprising measure of success; so much so that at times I find myself "arguing out" the person whom I see with results that presently justify each separate stage of my reasoning.

. . . . .

I had, no later than last week, a curious illustration of this. It happened that I was on a train, in a chair-car, going north from my own city for a vacation in the woods. At such-and-such a station – the name is of no consequence; if necessary, though, I could furnish it upon request – there entered into the train a party of five persons. I set myself to observe them quietly from behind my newspaper.

It was at once evident that they all knew one another. The fact that they got on the train together, that they were all talking together, and that one, the senior of the party, held the tickets for all, justified this first step of reasoning.

Of the party themselves the oldest was a man of about thirty-five to forty years, the next a lady perhaps a little younger, then a girl in her teens, and finally two little boys dressed almost alike. Here then was a second problem – what was the connection or relationship between them? I set myself to thinking it out. Under what circumstances does a man carry with him two little boys in similar suits? Why should a woman say to a man, "Have you got the children's hold-all?" Hold-what? And why were they holding it?

The explanation came upon me, as such things often do, with a sudden flash. The five persons were a family! The man was the father, the lady was his wife, and the two little boys, identical in dress, strongly alike in features, were brothers!!

Another conclusion followed almost immediately. They were starting on a summer vacation – the man, for instance, was carrying what I recognized to be a fishing-rod, the girl in her teens had under her arm a tennis racket in a case, and the porter had carried in for them a long leather bag with wooden sticks protruding over the top, which a little close reasoning showed to be golf clubs!

This neat piece of deduction carried with it quite naturally a further conclusion. This was to the effect that their vacation was to be spent on or near (or under) the water. The two little boys each had with him a toy yacht. These, I argued, would only float on water, and hence in the mountains or on a farm would be of no purpose. In addition to this, each child had on its head a sailor hat with the legend H.M.S. *Resolute*. If not water, the boys would hardly have been named after a ship.

The reader might ask at this point, how can I speak with such confidence of child, of children, of a girl in her teens? How could I know that they were children? I answer very simply that I could not and did not *know* it. I argued it only as a fair inference from their appearance.

On the basis thus laid down, I was able next to name to myself the exact destination of my unknown acquaintances. At the end of the line is a well-known summer resort, situated beside a lake. The train was to go to this point as its terminus and it was to stop nowhere else in between. Therefore the passengers were going to this station. This was but logic.

I now set myself to see what further information I could piece together in regard to the personality, etc., of the group under observation. Here I must admit that my conclusions were halting and more slowly formed. Yet bit by bit I made progress. I observed that the lady presently took out a newspaper, and holding it right side up, remained for some time with her eyes fixed upon it. I inferred from this that she could read and write.

Meantime a similar observation of her husband convinced me that he was a lawyer. He sat for some time reading, or at least observing, a volume which bore the title "Law Reports," from his pocket there protruded a newspaper or journal with the heading in capitals "CANADA LEGAL TIMES," and he carried with him a bag of the kind commonly known as a brief-case. The inference was that he was either a lawyer or a liar.

So far, then, my conclusions were that the party consisted of a well-to-do lawyer and his wife (well-to-do because they rode on the train instead of walking) gong on, or proceeding on, a vacation to, or in, the water.

The next step was to try to work out their names. This I admit is a far more difficult process. Whether a name can actually be transferred from mind to mind by intense concentration of thought is an open question. Perhaps it can and perhaps it can't. At any rate, in this case I failed entirely, in spite of sitting with my mind intensely concentrated (till aroused by the conductor).

But where internal reasoning fails, observation may succeed. And so it proved. By keeping my ears open, instead of my mind, I was soon able to educe that the man's name was Henry. I argued this from the fact that his wife said, "When are we supposed to get in, Henry?" and a little later, "You sent a telegram, didn't you, Henry?"

The man's answer, "Yes," could be construed as an admission that his name was Henry.

The wife's name, I divined, or at least diagnosed, to be either Bessie or Mum. The man addressed her as Bessie, the children Mum. Later on it occurred to me that the word Mum was a short, or abbreviated, form of Mother. Very shortly afterwards, also, I was able to reason that the man's name was Henry Williams. Stamped in black letters on the end of one of his valises was the legend H. Williams. Could anything be more convincing?

. . . . . .

Indeed, just as I concluded this chain of reasoning, I realized that I knew them. . . . In fact, the man came across the car and sat down beside me.

"How are you?" he said. "Off on a vacation to the lake, I suppose? I'm just taking Bessie and the kids up there for a fortnight."

Then I realized that of course he was Henry Williams. I've known him and Bessie Williams for about sixteen years. In fact, I think that one of the little boys, I forgot which, is my godson.

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The trouble is that I am often so tied up in these chains of logic that I get tangled.

## ✻ *Our Get-Together Movement*

### THE WAY WE HAVE ORGANIZED TO "GET TOGETHER" IN OUR TOWN

I WANT to tell about the Get-Together Movement we've been carrying on in our town, because I think it will be a help to people to get together in other towns.

The way it began was this. For some time past some of us had

been feeling that we didn't get together enough. Whether it was from lack of opportunity or from lack of initiative, I don't know. But the fact was that we weren't getting together. So some of us began to think of how we could manage to get together better.

So the idea came up that a good way to start a movement in that direction would be to hold a lunch as a start. We thought if we could get together at a lunch it might serve as a beginning. So we began with a lunch.

Or rather, I should say that before we had the lunch a few of us got together at breakfast to work up the lunch. I don't know whose idea it first was, but at any rate a little group of us went and had breakfast at one of the hotels. We just had a plain breakfast – just cereals and grapefruit and eggs and bacon and a choice of steak – in fact, just the things they either had on the bill of fare or could get on half an hour's notice. It was quite informal. We put one of ourselves in the chair, as president, and had no speeches or anything of the sort except that the president said a few words, mainly about getting together and one or two about how the other men just added a word or two about how we hadn't been getting together in the past and hoping that in the future things would be different and we would get together.

It was felt at the same time that the purpose of the club should be service, and it was decided that a good form of service would be to eat lunch.

So the lunch came off soon after and was an unqualified success in every way. The president explained the aim of the organization, and a simple outline of a constitution was drawn up. For the use of others I append here the two or three principal clauses:

*Air of the organization – To get together.*

*Means to be taken to accomplish it – By coming together.*

*Purpose of the organization – Service.*

*Means of effecting it – By cultivating in the members a sense of service.*

*Politics of the organization – None.*

*Religion of the members – None.*

*Ideas represented – None.*

*Education and other tests for membership – None.*

*Fees, outside of food – Nothing.*

The constitution was voted with a great deal of enthusiasm. When the lunch broke up, it was felt that a real start had been made.

Well, having the lunch encouraged us to go right on, and so the next thing we had was a dinner. There was a feeling that you can get men together at a dinner where they sit together in a way in which you can't unless you do.

Of course, it took a good deal of work to get the dinner, a lot of spade work and team work. It's always that way. But at last we got over a hundred pledged to eat dinner and ventured to pull it off.

It certainly was a big success. It was quite informal. We just held it in one of the big hotels, taking the ordinary table d'hôte dinner that the hotel served that night and letting the members just come in and sit down and start eating when they liked and get up and leave just when they wanted to.

There were no speeches – just the president and one or two gave ten minutes' talk on service and community feeling. The president said that the way to get these was by getting together: he said that we had already done a lot just by sheer ground work and he wanted us all to hang right on and stick to it and see it through.

Well, since then we've been keeping the lunches and dinners going pretty regularly. And as a result we feel that we are beginning to know one another. I sat next to a man the other night whom I don't suppose I would have ever got to know if I hadn't sat next to him. We both remarked upon it. In fact, I don't think there's any better way to get next to a man than by sitting next to him when he's eating. You get a community feeling out of it. This man – I forget his name – said so too.

But we've cut out the local speakers. Somehow our members don't care to listen to one another. They all seem to feel that you get more community feeling, a far better sense of genuine fellowship, from an outsider. So we take our speakers now from a good way off.

And we've certainly had some wonderful talks. One of the first – I think the man was a professor – was a great talk; it was on "*How to Be 100 Per Cent Yourself*"; and there was another on "*How to Get 100 Per Cent Outside Yourself*"; and others on "*How to Think 100 Per Cent*" and on "*How to Be 100 Per Cent Awake.*"

There's no doubt the organization has done a whole lot towards bringing us all together. When the members meet on the street, they always say, "Good morning!" or "How are you?" or something of that sort,, or even stop for a second and say, "Well, how's it going?" or "How's the boy?"

In fact, you can generally tell the members of our organization on the street just by the look on their faces. I heard a man say the other day that he'd know them a mile off.

So what we feel is that there must be men of the same stamp as ourselves in other towns. We ought to know them and they ought to know us. Let's start something to get together.

# SHORT CIRCUITS IN THE OPEN AIR

## ⁂ *A Lesson on the Links*

### THE APPLICATION OF MATHEMATICS TO GOLF

It is only quite recently that I have taken up golf. In fact, I have only played for three or four years, and seldom more than ten games in a week or at most four in a day. I have only had a proper golf vest for two years: I only bought a "spoon" this year and I am not going to get Scotch socks till next year.

In short, I am still a beginner. I have once, it is true, had the distinction of "making a hole in one," in other words of hitting the ball into the pot, or can, or receptacle, in one shot. That is to say, after I had hit, a ball was found in the can and my ball was not found. It is what we call circumstantial evidence – the same thing that people are hanged for.

Under such circumstances I should have little to teach to anybody about golf. But it has occurred to me that from a certain angle my opinions may be of value. I at least bring to bear on the game all the resources of a trained mind and all the equipment of a complete education.

In particular I may be able to help the ordinary golfer – or "goofer" – others prefer "gopher" – by showing him something of the application of mathematics to golf.

Many a player is perhaps needlessly discouraged by not being able to calculate properly the chances and probabilities of progress in the game. Take, for example, the simple problem of "going round in bogey." The ordinary average player such as I am now becoming – something between a beginner and an expert – necessarily wonders to himself "Shall I ever be able to go around in bogey; will the time ever come when I shall make not one hole in bogey, but all the holes?"

To this, according to my calculations, the answer is overwhelmingly "yes." The thing is a mere matter of time and patience.

Let me explain for the few people who never play golf (such as night watchmen, night clerks in hotels, night operators, astronomers and negroes), that "bogey" is an imaginary player who does each hole at golf in the fewest strokes that a first-class player with ordinary luck ought to need for that hole.

Now an ordinary player finds it quite usual to do one hole out of the nine "in bogey," – as we golfers, or rather, "us goofers," call it, – but he wonders whether it will ever be his fate to do all the nine holes of the course in bogey. To which we answer again with absolute assurance, he will.

The thing is a simple instance of what is called the mathematical theory of probability. If a player usually and generally makes one hole in bogey, or comes close to it, his chance of making any one particular hole in bogey is one in nine. Let us say, for easier calculation, that it is one in ten. When he makes it, his chance of doing the same with the next hole is also one in ten; therefore, taken from the start his chance of making the two holes successively in bogey is one-tenth of a tenth chance. In other words it is one in a hundred.

The reader sees already how encouraging the calculation is. Here is at last something definite about his progress. Let us carry it further. His chance of making three holes in bogey one after the other will be one in a thousand, his chance of four one in ten thousand and his chance of making the whole round in bogey will be exactly one in 1,000,000,000, – that is one in a billion games.

In other words, all he has to do is to keep right on. But for how long? he asks. How long will it take, playing the ordinary number of games in a month, to play a billion? Will it take several years? Yes, it will.

An ordinary player plays about 100 games in a year, and will therefore play a billion games in exactly 10,000,000 years. That gives us precisely the time it will need for persons like the reader and myself to go round in bogey.

Even this calculation needs a little revision. We have to allow for the fact that in 10,000,000 years the shrinking of the earth's crust, the diminishing heat of the sun and the general slackening down of the whole solar system, together with the passing of eclipses, comets and showers of meteors, may put us off our game.

In fact, I doubt if we shall ever get around in bogey.

. . . . .

Let us try something else. Here is a very interesting calculation in regard to "allowing for the wind."

I have noticed that a great many golf players of my own particular class are always preoccupied with the question of "allowing for the wind." My friend, Amphibius Jones, for example, just before driving always murmurs something, as if in prayer, about "allowing for the wind." After driving he says with a sigh,

"I didn't allow for the wind." In fact, all through my class there is a general feeling that our game is practically ruined by the wind. We ought really to play in the middle of the desert of Sahara where there isn't any.

It occurred to me that it might be interesting to reduce to a formula the effect exercised by the resistance of the wind on a moving golf ball. For example, in our game of last Wednesday, Jones in his drive struck the ball with what he assures me was his full force, hitting in with absolute accuracy, as he himself admits, fair in the center, and he himself feeling, on his own assertion, absolutely fit, his eye being (a very necessary thing with Jones), absolutely "in," and he also having on his proper sweater – a further necessary condition of first-class play. Under all the favorable circumstances the ball only advanced fifty yards! It was evident at once that it was a simple matter of the wind: the wind, which was of that treacherous character which blows over the links unnoticed, had impinged full upon the ball, pressed it backward and forced it to the earth.

Here then is a neat subject of calculation. Granted that Jones, – as measured on a hitting machine the week the circus was here, – can hit two tons and that this whole force was pressed against a golf ball only one inch and a quarter in diameter. What happens? My reader will remember that the superficial area of such a golf ball is 3.1415 times $\frac{5}{4}$ square inches multiplied by 4, or, more simply, $4PR^2$. And all of this driven forward with the power of 4,000 pounds to the inch!

In short, taking Jones's statement at their face value the ball would have traveled, had it not been for the wind, no less than 6½ miles.

I give the next calculation of even more acute current interest. It is in regard to "moving the head." How often is an admirable stroke at golf spoiled by moving the head! I have seen members of our golf club sit silent and glum all evening, murmuring from time to time, "I moved my head." When Jones and I play together I often hit the ball sideways into the vegetable garden from which no ball returns (they have one of these on every links; it is a Scottish invention). And whenever I do so Jones always says, "You moved your head." In return when *he* drives his ball away up into air and down again ten yards in front of him, I always retaliate by saying, "You moved your head, old man."

In short, if absolute immobility of the head could be achieved the major problem of golf would be solved.

Let us put the theory mathematically. The head, poised on

the neck, has a circumferential sweep or orbit of about two inches, not counting the rolling of the eyes. The circumferential sweep of a golf ball is based on a radius of 250 yards, or a circumference of about 1,600 yards, which is very nearly equal to a mile. Inside this circumference is an area of *27,878,400* square feet, the whole of which is controlled by a tiny movement of the human neck. In other words, if a player were to wiggle his neck even $\frac{1}{190}$ of an inch the amount of ground on which the ball might falsely alight would be half a million square feet. If at the same time he multiplies the effect by rolling his eyes, the ball might alight anywhere.

I feel certain that after reading this any sensible player will keep his head still.

A further calculation remains, – and one perhaps of even greater practical interest than the ones above.

Everybody who plays golf is well aware that on some days he plays better than on others. Question – how often does a man really play his game?

I take the case of Amphibius Jones. There are certain days, when he is, as he admits himself, *"put off his game"* by not having on his proper golf vest. On other days the light puts him off his game; at other times the dark; so, too, the heat; or again the cold. He is often put off his game because he has been up too late the night before; or similarly because he has been to bed too early the night before; the barking of a dog always puts him off his game; so do children; or adults, or women. Bad news disturbs his game; so does good; so also does the absence of news.

All of this may be expressed mathematically by a very simple application of the theory of permutations and probability; let us say that there are altogether fifty forms of disturbance any one of which puts Jones off his game. Each one of these disturbances happens, say, once in ten days. What chance is there that a day will come when *not a single one of them occurs*? The formula is a little complicated but mathematicians will recognize the answer at once as $x/1 + x^2/1 \ldots x^n/1$. In fact, that is exactly how often Jones plays at his best; $x/1 + x^2/1 \ldots x^n/1$ worked out in time and reckoning four games to the week and allowing for leap years and solar eclipses, it comes to about once in 2,930,000 years.

And from watching Jones play I think that this is about right.

## ✻ *The Family at Football*

### SHOWING HOW THE GREAT COLLEGE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME OF THE SEASON WAS VARIOUSLY REPORTED

THE OFFICIAL REPORT
(More or less like this)

WILLIAMSON got the ball and opened up with a low kick down field against the wind. Smith punted. Jones fumbled. Brown fell down. Robertson got up. Peterson tackled low. Johnson kicked high. Thompson touched down. Jackson converted. Quarter time. Jones kicked. Diplock ran four yards. Brown was put off. Thompson came on. . . . Yards. . . . More yards . . . half time . . . quarter kick . . . punt . . . yards . . . points . . . GAME.

AS SEEN FROM THE STADIUM BENCHES, ROW 4, BY MISS FLOSSIE FITZCLIPPET BROWN, AND REPORTED TO HER GIRL FRIEND IN CONVERSATION.

Certainly it was a wonderful game. I had on my wine-colored dress and the hat to match, and it was cold enough so that you could wear fur around your neck. That's one of the great things about football games, you can wear fur. That's why they play so late in the season, at least so some of the boys said. Most of the girls had on cloth coats, so of course you don't see as much color as at a ball game in the summer. But the two teams wore bright-colored sweaters.

One side – I think it was our side – had bright blue, and the other side were in dark red. But they are not a bit careful of their suits when they play and some of them got into a frightful mess from falling down by accident on the ground. But when they get too dirty the umpire turns them out of the game and takes on a man with a new sweater. The boys explained it all to me.

But I really know a lot about the game because my brother Ted plays on the team. They give another touch of color by having some of the boys stand along the edge of the ground with bright bathrobes on. The umpires have on white sweaters and there are people called referees and they wear long white

coats to give a touch of light.

The game was terribly exciting. The side that I think was our side were all kicking the ball one way and the other side the other way. Jack was sitting on one side of me and Bruce on the other and they explained everything so clearly – all about the yards and the different points – that I could understand practically all of it very soon after it had happened. Sometimes, of course, only the referee understands and the scoring has to be done on a special board at the end of the field so as to add it up. But I could tell which was our side all the time even when they changed courts after each rubber.

I saw ever so many people that we knew there because where we were in the grandstand, by standing up and looking round you could see practically everybody. I thought a great many of the hats perfectly sweet. They seem to be wearing softer colors this autumn. I saw one hat of Valencia blue felt that was just a dream.

Papa and Uncle Peter were there, but I don't think they saw us. They seemed to be looking at the game all the time.

It got tremendously exciting toward the end. Both sides were exactly even with the same number of sets and the boys explained to me that it was just a question now which side could knock down the referee and sit on him. No doubt it sounds brutal, but really when you are there you get so excited that you forget. Again and again as he slipped in and out putting the ball into position, they nearly got him, but each time he slipped out.

Just at the end it got so exciting – I don't know what it was – something to do with yards, that I stood right up on the seat. So did a lot of the girls. Jack and Bruce had to hold me by the ankles or I might have fallen.

And in the end, I think that the side that I think was our side won the whole game! Wasn't that splendid?

Oh, football is just delicious.

AS REPORTED BY MR. EDWARD CHUNK BROWN, SENIOR, FATHER OF MISS FLOSSIE FITZCLIPPET BROWN, OVER THE COFFEE AND CIGARS AT HIS DINNER TABLE THAT EVENING.

You didn't see the big game to-day? You certainly missed it. My boy Ted was playing in it. You ought to have been there. Ted was playing in the forward line, and I must say Ted put up a great game. I tell you, this college football is about as fine and manly a sport as you can get.

Look at Ted. Why, Ted was just a little shrimp till I got him

started into football at the prep (I was always keen on the game. My brother and I both played on the college team in 1895, though Peter wasn't what you'd call really first class). Well, look at Ted now. Why, he's heavier than I was myself.

Yes, sir, that was a great game today. At one time they broke right through the center and they'd have got clear away with it but for a tackle that my boy Ted made – one of the best tackles I ever saw, at least in the game today. Of course, they do less running than we did, but Ted got in one pretty good run today. Ted's quick on his feet, and what's more, Ted can use his head. Now there was one time to-day when Ted – Ted – Ted – Ted – Ted.

AS REPORTED BY MISS MARY DEEPHEART BROWN, ELDER SISTER OF MISS FLOSSIE FITZCLIPPET BROWN AND DAUGHTER OF EDWARD CHUNK BROWN, SENIOR, IN A CONFIDENTIAL LETTER TO ONE OF HER SIX ONLY FRIENDS.

I must tell you all about the perfectly wonderful football game last Saturday. I hadn't seen Ernest for three days and I was afraid that something had happened or that I had said something, because once before Ernest said that something I said had made him feel just terrible for days and days till he knew that I hadn't said what I said.

And then I got a note from Ernest to ask me if he might take me to the game, and so I knew it was all right. Papa said, at first, that he would come with us, but I was so afraid that it might mean a chill, that I got Flossie to get Mother to get Ted to get Uncle Peter to take him.

Anyway, it meant that I went with Ernest by ourselves and there was no one else there, and we had awfully good seats, right up at the back in a corner. There was a post partly in front of us, but it didn't prevent us from seeing anything.

All through the first half of the game – football games are divided into three or four halves of about five minutes each – Ernest kept looking into my face in the strangest way. I felt that he had something that he wanted to say, and I looked back at him to try to read in his face what it was, but of course Ernest has the kind of face that is hard to read even when you look right into it.

Once Ernest seemed to be just going to say something, but at that very minute, there was a lot of shouting and yelling, something must have happened, I think, to do with the football. But presently, in the second half when the game was less exciting, because I think that both sides were exactly even or some-

thing, and the time nearly all gone, Ernest quite all of a sudden, put out his hand and took mine and said that there was nobody in the world who meant to him what I did and that ever since he had known me he cared for nothing except me, and that the law office are now giving him over four hundred dollars a month and that if I wouldn't marry him he would give up the law altogether and take the first boat to Costa Rica.

And I said I didn't know what father would say and Ernest said he didn't care a damn what father would say (Ernest is so manly in the way he talks) and he offered to break my father's neck for me if I liked. So I said that I hadn't ever meant to get married but to be some sort of sister, but that if he liked, I would get married this time for his sake. And just then one of the caretakers came to tell us that the game was over and the people had gone and they wanted to sweep up the seats. So we went home together.

I think football is a perfectly wonderful game.

AS REPORTED BY PETER HASBIN BROWN, BROTHER OF EDWARD, SENIOR, AND UNCLE OF FLOSSIE, MARY AND TED.

Yes, I saw the game to-day. Pretty rotten. Ed's boy Ted was playing, and so I went with Ed and his little boy, Billie, to see the game. I hadn't seen a game since 1900, but of course Ed and I both played on the college team, though Ed was no good. As I see it, they've pretty well spoiled the old game. There doesn't seem to be a rule that they haven't changed. Why, nowadays you can hardly understand it. In my time, of course, the game was far more exciting.

Well, for one thing, the fellows could kick further, and the men were heavier and could shove harder and run faster. Now the whole game seems just dead. My nephew, Ted, has the makings of a good player in him; he plays something of the kind of game I did. I've told him a lot of things. But you take all these rules about yards, and downs and offside play, it's all changed; a man can't understand them. I sat next to my little nephew Billie – he's Ed's son, he's eight – and I said, "Can you understand it, Billie?" and he said, "Not quite, Uncle Peter."

There you are, he couldn't understand it, and I said, "It was a darned sight better game thirty years ago, Billie," and he said, "Was it, Uncle Peter?" He's a bright kid.

But the way they have the game now, there is no interest in it. There was a whole lot of shouting and yelling, but no enthusiasm. A lot of them were waving their hats and hooting till they were hoarse, but there was no enthusiasm. When I used

to play and some one would shout from the touch line (we used to stand right around the game then), "Go it, Pete!" well, that was enthusiasm. You don't get that now.

Oh, no, the game is gone to hell.

AS REPORTED BY BILLIE COMINGUP BROWN, AGED 8, YOUNGER SON OF EDWARD BROWN, SENIOR.

Gee! It was wonderful! Gee!

BY MRS. UPTOWN BROWN – OTHERWISE "MOTHER" – PARENT OF FLOSSIE, MARY, TED, AND BILLIE, AND WIFE OF EDWARD CHUNK BROWN, SENIOR.

No, please don't go yet. We've plenty of time for another rubber. They're all at the football game. My little boy Ted is playing, and my two little girls are there, too. Now, do stay! And won't you have another whiskey and soda?

## ✻ *Life in the Open*

### REFLECTIONS VOUCHSAFED TO ME BY MY HOSTESS IN THE WILDERNESS

"Yes, we come up every Fall," she said. "We're both so passionately fond of the open air. Ransome, will you close that window. There's a draft."

"Yes, ma'am," said the butler.

"And we love to do everything for ourselves. Ransome, will you please pass me that ash-tray from across the table?"

"Yes, ma'am," said the butler.

"And we live here quite without form or ceremony – that's what makes it so nice, it's all so simple. Gwendoline, you may put on the finger-bowls, and tell William to serve the coffee in the cardroom. . . ."

So I knew then that I was getting an opportunity to observe at first hand the life in the open, the simple life, right in the wilderness, of which my richer friends have so often spoken to me.

. . . . .

"We like, you know, the roughness of it," my hostess went on after we were seated over our coffee – "the journey up and

everything. Of course, it's not quite so rough to come up now as it used to be, now that they have built the new motor highway. This time we were able to bring up both the town cars, and before that it was always a question just what we could bring up.

"I *do* think the big closed cars are so much nicer when one is roughing it – Gwendoline, will you pass the cigarettes, please? – they keep the air out so much better, and our new one, perhaps you noticed it, is the kind in which you can draw the curtains and arrange it something like a drawing-room on a train. We are able to come up at night in it. I always think it much nicer – don't you? – to come up through the mountains at night. One sleeps better than in the day."

. . . . . .

There was a little pause, during which two noiseless maids removed the coffee cups and a noiseless man in a semi-feudal dress brought in picture-book logs for a fire six feet wide.

. . . . . .

"Of course, it is not all so easy," continued my hostess. "The food up here is always such a question. Of course, we can always get meat from the village – there is quite a village now, you know, though when my husband first came up twenty years ago there was nothing – and we can get milk and eggs and vegetables from the farmers, and, of course, the men bring in fish all the time, and our gardener manages now to raise a good deal of fruit under glass, but beyond that it is very difficult to get anything.

"Only yesterday, for example, the housekeeper came to tell me that we had not enough broilers for lunch; somebody had made a silly mistake and we were one short. We had to send Alfred (he drives fastest) back to the city with the big car to get one. Even then, lunch was half an hour late. Things like that happen all the time. One has to learn to be philosophical.

"But surely it is worth it – isn't it? – for the pleasure of being up here in the wilderness, so far away from everything and everybody. I sometimes feel up here as if one were cut off from the whole world – William, will you turn on the radio?"

"Yes, ma'am," said the footman.

"I think it's the municipal elections and, of course, my husband is tremendously interested. His company has been trying to get better city government for so long; they need pure government because of their franchises, and it has been costing them a tremendous lot of money to get it. What do you say,

William, not working? Then will you please ask Jones to tell the electricians to look at it?"

. . . . .

My hostess smoked her cigarette in silence for a minute or two, while her attentive eye followed the maids as they moved about the room, picking up coffee cups and ash-trays and bringing cigarettes. "Gwendoline," she said, "I think you had better tell James to give us more furnace heat and see that there are fires in the upper bedrooms to-night. It's turning a little chilly."

"I always like," she continued, turning to me again, "to see to everything myself. It takes trouble, but it's the only way. But, I beg your pardon, you were asking me something. Fishing! Oh, yes, there is the most glorious fishing up here. I must tell Gwendoline to tell Mrs. Edwards to see that they give you fish at breakfast. It's just an ideal fishing country, my husband says. We send William out every morning, and sometimes William and Ransome both. Often, so my husband tells me, when the weather is really clear he has William up and out by four o'clock – my husband is so fond of early rising, though he can't get up now himself the way he used to – but he always likes to get William and Ransome out early.

"They bring back the most beautiful fish. Trout? Yes, I think so. I don't precisely know because, of course, I never go myself, but I think trout and sea-bass and finnan haddie – they keep us beautifully supplied. Was that finnan haddie that you caught this morning, William?"

"Doré, ma'am."

"Oh, yes, it's the same thing, isn't it?"

"Yes, ma'am, just the same."

"Thank you, William, you can take the glasses; we're done with them. You see, William knows all about fish, as he comes from Newfoundland, do you not, William?"

"No, ma'am, Saskatchewan."

"Some place of the sort, so I thought."

. . . . .

"What do you say – our amusements here? Oh, we simply don't have any. We have always both felt that up here in this beautiful air (that French window at the end of the room needs closing, Ransome) it is amusement enough just to be alive. So we have never bothered to think about amusements. Of course, my husband had the billiard-room built because that is really his one pastime, and this card-room because it is mine, and we put in the tennis courts, though it was hard to do, so as to have

them for the children. But that is all. We have the golf links, of course – perhaps you noticed them as you came up.

"It was really quite a triumph for my husband making the course here. He did every bit of it himself. At one time he had nearly two hundred Italians working. My husband, as you know, is terribly energetic; I often call him a dynamo. The summer when he was building the golf course he never seemed to stop; always sitting with his cigar in his mouth first under a tree on one side, looking at his Italians, and then on the other side – in fact, he was always *somewhere*. I used to wonder how he could keep it up.

. . . . . .

"But I am sorry," concluded my hostess, "I am afraid it is time I was ordering you all off to bed. We keep such early hours here that we go to bed at midnight.

"But perhaps you'd rather stay up a little and play billiards or cards, and there are always one or two of the servants up – at any rate till about three, and then, I think, my husband is sending William fishing. Good night."

# SAVE ME FROM MY FRIENDS

# ✻ *Save Me from My Friends*

## I
## FROM MY FRIEND THE DEADBEAT

He has about him such a simple and appealing way, so friendly and so flattering and so humble. And each time I *know* that it is another ten dollars that he wants, just that, only that – not my affection nor my converse – just ten dollars. Yet he gets it – each time for the last time – he gets it.

. . . . .

Sometimes he meets me in the street, always on a fine day, a fine warm day with a touch of the springtime, or the summertime, or the soft touch of autumn or the sunny exhilaration of winter in the air. He would never stop me in the rain, or the sleet. He comes, by instinct, with the sunshine. And his manner, so cheery – the spring tulips are not in it with him.

"And how," he asks, "is your little boy?"

I swallow the bait at once. "Fine," I answer, "he was not so well last week, but since Tuesday he's in great shape."

"That's good, that's good," says my deadbeat friend, literally beaming with pleasure.

It seems impossible to doubt his affectionate concern.

"By the way," he continues, as if in a mere train of thought incidental to his pleasure over my little boy's health, "I'm glad I ran into you this morning. It just happens that to-day I'm rather squeezed – in fact, I'm in a corner——"

I recognize the situation at once. I realize that my friend's troubles always take the form of an angular imprisonment. That corner – you'd think that he would learn to keep out in the open! But no, apparently he gets squeezed, shoved, pushed – all those things happen to him – and as a result of the squeezing and shoving and pushing he gets into a corner.

Picture then the situation? Here's a man in a corner, a man with an affectionate regard for my little son, and ten dollars will take him out of that corner. Refuse him? Quite impossible.

And after all perhaps it's worth it. If all my friends would greet me with the same winning friendliness and the same solicitude, I think I'd gladly invest ten dollars in each of them.

. . . . .

Unfortunately, however, being pushed into a corner is not the worst thing that happens to my friend. Sometimes apparently the ground opens under him and he falls into a hole. "Old man," he pleads, "I'm in a hole — till Tuesday." I note that there is always a termination of his sufferings in sight. By some incurable optimism, he really thinks so.

However deep the hole — and at times it is described, so to speak, as a hell of a hole – he will be out of it by Tuesday. And better than that, by next month at the latest, any next month, he expects to "see daylight." This expectation, I know, he has cherished for years. Just what the daylight is, what form it takes, I don't know. But my friend confidently expects to see it.

A man, then, who is sunk in a deep hole, but who expects daylight next Tuesday – certainly that's worth ten dollars.

. . . . .

Sometimes I meet him with other people. And if I do I know that he is some one's guest. If he is in a club, some one has brought him there. If he is at the theater, some one has paid for his seat. If he is at a concert, some one has given him a ticket.

And wherever he is, whatever he regards, always the same enthusiastic appreciation. Not for him to criticize! Not for him to find the company dull, or the music poor, or the play inferior. Everything is first rate always; for he is being treated, being paid for, and has lost the right to be disagreeable.

. . . . .

I have often wondered how it must feel to be such a man. Staggering along in life, in holes and pitfalls, beaming on surly acquaintances, cherishing the make-believe illusion of a friendship that he sold for twenty dollars long ago; homeless himself – for he lives nowhere – yet entering with admiring words the homes of others. "This is a charming room!" he says. Any room is charming to him, where there is a free seat, and the chance of lingering to a meal. How does it feel, I wonder, to be him?

. . . . .

But notice the queer thing about it. Never mind his motives, or *why* he does it, but just take the fact. How amiable he is! What an uncomplaining companion! What a fund of appreciation of our lightest jests, what a wealth of sympathy — in words, at any rate — with our most superficial sorrow.

Judge him just as an appearance, and what a man! What a heart!

. . . . .

Thinking thus of my friend, the deadbeat, I sometimes apply the same reasoning to the rest of us. How agreeable we are when we are forced to be. You, my dear reader, in the presence of your employer, how bright you are, how good-tempered. When you wish to tell something, or to get something, how easy and accommodating you are, how free from irritation. In other words, each of us, when we want something, instinctively takes on a pleasant bearing. And perhaps if we keep it up it sinks into our character and what was make-believe becomes reality.

. . . . .

So let it be, or rather so let it might have been, with my poor friend, the deadbeat.

Might have been, I say, for just of late, just within the last couple of months, a great change has come over him.

It appears that two months ago he saw daylight – actually saw it. What caused it I don't know, but the first shape it took was a suit of new raiment, a stylish coat, a cane with a gold head, a hat in the latest fashion; and on this followed a suite of rooms in a first-class hotel, and membership, revived I know not how, in one of the most exclusive clubs.

What the source of this restored fortune may be I do not know, but of the existence of the change there seems no doubt.

Nor is the change limited to these externals only. It goes deeper than that. When I talk with my friend on the street now – which is rare, for he no longer lingers in the sunshine – he does not ask after my little boy. He has no time. He is too busy telling me of the house that he is building in the most secluded of the suburbs; he is too much occupied with explaining how rotten was the play he saw (from a box for which he paid) last night; how inferior the music and how poor the food at this or that reception.

And of my lost ten dollars, and my twenty, and the two fifteens and the big hole that cost me fifty – not a word. He has no thought of repayment. It has all passed from his mind. And after all, why should he repay? I realize that the repayment lay in his humble manner, in his gentle flattering interest, and in the pathos of his make-believe solicitude.

I must wait till perhaps he will have burned up his new daylight. And meantime I must keep a ten-dollar bill warm in my pocket for him.

## II
## FROM MY FRIEND THE REPORTER

HE CAME up to me on the platform just after I had finished giving my address, his notebook open in his hand.

"Would you mind," he said, "just telling me the main points of your speech? I didn't get to hear it."

"You weren't at the lecture?"

"No," he answered, pausing to sharpen his pencil, "I was at the hockey game."

"Reporting it?"

"No, I don't report that sort of thing. I only do the lectures and the highbrow stuff. Say, it was a great game. What did you say the lecture was about?"

"It was called 'The Triumphal Progress of Science.' "

"On science, eh?" he said, writing rapidly as he spoke.

"Yes," I answered, "on science."

He paused.

"How do you spell 'triumphal,' " he asked; "is it a PH or an F?"

I told him.

"And now," he went on, "what was the principal idea, just the main thing, don't you know, of your address?"

"I was speaking," I said, "of our advanced knowledge of radiating emanations and the light it throws on the theory of atomic structure."

"Wait a minute," he said, "till I get that. Is it r-a-d-i-a-t-i-n-g? . . . the light it throws, eh? . . . good. . . . I guess I got that."

He prepared to shut his little book.

"Have you ever been here before?"

"No," I said, "it's my first time."

"Are you staying in the new hotel?"

"Yes."

"How do you like it?"

"It's very comfortable," I said.

He reopened his book and scribbled fast.

"Did you see the big new abattoir they are putting in?"

"No," I said, "I didn't hear of it."

"It's the third biggest north of Philadelphia. What do you think of it?"

"I didn't see it," I said.

He wrote a little and then paused.

"What do you think," he asked, "of this big mix-up in the city council?"

"I didn't hear of it," I said.

"Do you think that the aldermen are crooked?"

"I don't know anything about these aldermen," I said.

"No," he answered, "perhaps not, but wouldn't you think it likely that they'd be crooked?"

"They often are crooked enough," I admitted, "in fact, very often a pack of bums."

"Eh, what's that, a pack of bums? That's good, that's great" – he was all enthusiasm now – "that's the kind of stuff, you know, that our paper likes to get. You see, so often you go and take a lecture and there's nothing said at all – nothing like that, don't you see? And there's no way to make anything out of it. . . . But with this I can feature it up fine. 'A pack of bums!' Good. Do you suppose they took a pretty big graft out of building the abattoir?"

"I'm afraid," I said, "that I don't know anything about it."

"But say," he pleaded, "you'd think it likely that they did?"

"No, no," I repeated, "I don't know anything about it."

"All right," he said reluctantly, "I guess I'll have to leave that out. Well, much obliged. I hope you come again. Good night."

And the next morning as I was borne away from that city in the train I read his report in the paper, headed up with appropriate capitals and subheadings:

THINKS ALDERMEN PACK OF BUMS

*Distinguished Lecturer Talks on Christian Science*

"The distinguished visitor," so ran his report, "gave an interesting talk on Christian Science in the auditorium of the Y.M.C.A. before a capacity audience. He said that we were living in an age of radio and that in his opinion the aldermen of the city were a pack of bums. The lecturer discussed very fully the structure of anatomy which he said had emanated out of radio. He expressed his desire to hazard no opinion about the question of graft in regard to the new abattoir which he considers the finest that he has seen at any of his lectures. The address, which was freely punctuated with applause, was followed with keen attention, and the wish was freely expressed at the close that the lecturer might give it in other cities."

. . . . . .

There! That's the way he does it, as all of us who deal with him are only too well aware.

And am I resentful? I should say not. Didn't he say that there was a "capacity audience" when really there were only sixty-eight people; didn't he "punctuate the lecture with applause," and "animate it with keen attention"? . . . What more can a

lecturer want? And as to the aldermen and the graft and the heading up, that's our fault, not his. We want that sort of thing in our morning paper, and he gives it to us.

And with it, as his own share, a broad and kindly human indifference that never means to offend.

Let him trudge off into the night with his little book and pencil and his uncomplaining industry and take my blessing with him.

## III
## FROM MY FRIEND WITH A SPEECH TO MAKE

"THEY'VE invited me to attend this darned banquet next month," said Robinson. They want me to propose the toast to Our Country. I suppose it's easy enough, eh?"

He spoke with an affectation of indifference, but I knew what he was feeling underneath.

"I suppose," he went on, "all I have to do is to get up and jolly them along for fifteen minutes, eh?"

"That's all," I answered, "just jolly them along."

. . . . . .

I met him again a week later.

"They've got me down for this banquet on the 12th," he said. "They want me to propose Our Country."

"Do they?" I said.

"Yes, and I was thinking that perhaps a good idea might be to say something about the history of the country, don't you think?"

So then I knew that Robinson had got to the stage of looking up the encyclopedia.

"A good idea," I answered.

"I thought," he continued, "that I'd trace it down from early times and show the way it has come on. How do you think that would go?"

"I think," I said, "that that would go as far as you like."

. . . . . .

"Don't you think," asked Robinson, a few days later, "that it might be a good idea to work in Christopher Columbus – something about Columbus having been the first to dine on this continent, something about his dining *à la carte*, or *à la chart* – you see, '*carte*' and '*chart*' – if I can just work it in. Don't you think?"

"I think," I told him, "that if you can only work it in, it will make a tremendous hit."

That afternoon I saw him in the Public Library taking out the Life of Christopher Columbus.

. . . . . .

I happened to meet Robinson a few days later out in the country on a Sunday walk.

"They've got me down to speak at this big dinner on the 12th," he said.

"Oh, yes."

"I don't suppose there's any difficulty about doing a thing of that sort, is there?"

"None whatever," I answered.

From the look on his face, I could realize the stage of anxiety he had reached.

"I didn't know," I said, "that you were in the habit of walking out here?"

"I don't," he answered, "not usually. But I thought with this speech to make next Tuesday week, I'd take long walks so as to be able to think over a few ideas. Don't you think that's a good plan?"

"Oh, yes," I said, "fine! How far do you walk each time?"

"Oh, about ten or twelve miles."

"Yes," I said, "that ought to do it."

I watched him disappear a little later along the side of a meadow, seeing neither the dandelions nor the daisies, but with his mind riveted on Christopher Columbus, and murmuring in his fancy, "Mr. Chairman and ladies and gentlemen——"

Such shipwreck dies the prospect of a "Pleasant Evening" make of the human mind.

. . . . . .

"I was thinking," he said on the following Saturday, "that a fellow might get off something about the future of the country, eh?"

"An excellent idea!" I assured him.

. . . . . .

"You weren't at church," I said to Robinson, "on Sunday——"

"No," he answered, "I have been working on this damn speech for this damn banquet; I've got to follow right after the damn toastmaster. Gad! I've got to think up some damn thing or other to say between now and Tuesday."

. . . . . .

On Monday, Robinson was not at his office. I understood that he was working at his speech. I saw the banquet announced in the newspapers that day and noticed that there were to be fifteen speakers.

. . . . . .

On Thursday morning I called up Robinson on the 'phone. "No," he said, "I'm not coming downtown. They got me stung to speak at this cursed banquet to-night on Our Country. Gad, I don't know what to say. I've had no time to study it up."

"Too bad," I said.

"Yes, and what I think I'll do is, I'll write the blasted thing out. It's more certain that way, isn't it?"

"Dead certain."

. . . . .

That evening I called Robinson up again about seven-thirty to wish him success.

His voice sounded muffled.

"I'm not going," he said, "I've caught a sort of a nasty chill. I think it's perhaps a touch of bronchitis (here he coughed), or else it's just a touch of lumbago or sciatica; in fact, I'm in pretty poor shape. I guess I'd better not go out to-night. My wife says I'd be crazy to go."

"What about your speech?"

"I sent it over," he answered, "Billy Jones is going to read it to the boys."

. . . . .

Next day I naturally supposed that the episode of Robinson and his speech was all over.

It soon appeared that it was only beginning.

"Great heavens," he said to me when we met that morning, "did you see the morning paper?"

"The Chinese massacres?" I asked.

"No, my speech, and Good Gad – Billy Jones! The paper hardly put in any of it, anyhow, and left out all the best parts, and what they did put in Billy Jones got all bashed up."

"Bashed up?"

"Yes, look at this, where I said, 'This country has a great destiny in front of it,' Billy Jones put it, 'This country has a great destitution in front of it.' How the — could he have——"

I didn't stop to hear any more.

. . . . .

Robinson is still talking, even after the lapse of months, of what he *would* have said if he had been able to go, of other ideas that came to him later, of jokes that he thought would have gone down well, of gags that he would have had half a mind to put in.

And he really thinks – or tries to – that his wife wouldn't let him go to the banquet.

## IV
## FROM MY FRIEND THE GUIDE

Now that I am safely returned from my annual fishing and hunting trip into the northern woods, I wish to set down the truth about my friend "Ed" the guide.

I do not care to do this in the heart of the woods, nor on the edge of a waterfall, nor on the waters of a lonely lake. It might have hurt his feelings.

I class Ed as my friend because I call him "Ed": if this doesn't constitute friendship, what will? In other things we are not so much connected: in point of race Ed is half English, half French-Canadian, half Algonquin, and partly from the United States. I have heard him say, too, that his mother came from Germany. In fact, Ed is a melting pot.

The first thing I object to in Ed as a guide is that he never seemed to know his way. A guide ought to know that much anyway. "I'm not just sure," he used to say, "which way we go here, but I guess this is the track. You just carry the canoe up this here hill and I'll walk ahead and take a look." Most of the time when we were on the march I carried the canoe and Ed "took a look" in various directions, strolling gently among the pine trees.

"You just start a fire," he would say, "while I look and see if this is the lake where we fish after supper."

I spent most of my time in carrying the canoe, lighting fires, and washing dishes. Ed mostly smoked and told stories of other men he had taken out.

"I took a gentleman out here last fall," he said, "a mighty nice man of the name of Richardson, or Richards; you'd likely know him for he came from either New York or Cleveland. We caught a beauty right here above this fall, just as good as the big one you got just now. Well, sir, this Mr. Richardson he was so pleased when he seen that fish that he gave me a fishing rod. We was standing right here, with this Mr. Richardson right on that rock where you are, and I was here inside him like, and he got this big trout, all of three pounds, just like that big one you got."

"Did he land it?" I asked, speaking through the noise of the water.

"I done it for him," answered Ed, "just the way I landed yours. Well, sir, as I say, when Mr. Richardson seen that fish landed, he said, 'Ed,' says he, 'that's the biggest fish I ever

caught or seen caught. I'm so pleased,' he says, 'I'm going to give you a rod.' "

Ed paused and shook off the bite of a fish that had bothered him. He could *not-catch* fish better than any one I ever saw.

"He had in his hand," continued Ed, "one of them rods made of split wood, like the one you're fishing with. 'Here, Ed,' he says, when he come off the rock, 'take this here rod.' I've got it still back home."

After this, of course, there was nothing to do except give Ed my rod. I had to live up to the standard of Mr. Richardson.

. . . . .

I last my best knife very shortly afterwards in the same way.

"That's a dandy knife you've got there," said Ed, "you can't get them there up here. This Mr. Richardson I was talking about at the fall had a knife just the mate to that. We was sitting here one evening and he was peeling potatoes with this knife just the way you are. We'd had a dandy catch at the fall, just like what we got to-day, only to-day they run a little bigger, and Mr. Richardson was feeling pretty good after it. 'Here, Ed,' he says, says he, 'take this knife for a reminder.' I took it and kept it and I had it till I lost it just as we were starting on this trip. Yes, sir, he says, 'Ed,' says he, 'take this knife.' "

. . . . .

It appeared that Mr. Richardson also got rid of his landing net on the trip. "Take it, Ed," – these were the words he is reported to have used, "I shan't be wanting it back in the city. You keep it."

So my landing net followed Mr. Richardson's.

. . . . .

As we moved towards home, I realized that bit by bit Richardson had parted with his equipment. "Take it, Ed," were the words he generally used. Could I say less? My best rod, my net, two reels, my book of flies, were all gone when we were still a hundred miles from home on our way back. I estimated that at this point the year before Richardson had had no fishing tackle left. Then I realized with concern that from this point on Richardson had begun to lose his clothes.

"This Mr. Richardson," said Ed, "had one of them fishing coats same as yours. They're certainly a mighty handy coat. And on the way out of the woods – in fact, it was somewhere here – we'd been having mighty good sport, nearly as good as the sport you and I have had, and Mr. Richardson give me his coat. It

seems he never wore it in the city. 'Take it, Ed,' says he, "I won't be wearing it.' "

. . . . .

Next day, at a waterfall a few miles lower down, Ed indicated for me the very spot where Richardson had parted with his fishing cap.

. . . . .

Twenty miles below that is the spot, which I will show to any one for ten dollars a day, where Richardson gave away all his socks, his two red handkerchiefs, and his three extra shirts.

. . . . .

The crisis came that evening. As we sat by the fire Ed promised to show me next morning the very spot where Richardson gave him his boots. It seems that the exact spot can be located to a nicety. I lay awake thinking that night with the moonlight falling through the pine trees and the river singing in the silence, thinking of Richardson's boots.

Dimly I began to remember that I had heard something about a man from my own town whose name actually was Richards, or Richardson, or something like it, and who died of pneumonia just on his return from a fishing trip.

. . . . .

That night I took action. In the silence of midnight, I rose from my gray blanket and stole off among the pine trees. I took nothing in the way of fishing equipment, *but I had my boots on.* I followed the down way course of the river and two hours after daylight I struck a railway track and a train that took me home. *I have my boots still.*

But I often think of poor Richardson when the time came when he saw Ed looking at his fishing pants as he sharpened up a two-edged hunting knife.

# PEOPLE WE KNOW

# ✻ *People We Know*

## I
## THE MAN IN THE PULLMAN CAR

I HAD hardly had time to sit down in the smoking end of the Pullman car and to get my pipe alight before he spoke to me.

"Cold, isn't it?" he said.

So I knew at once who he was: he was the Man in the Pullman Car – the Man who is *always* in the Pullman car, waiting to talk to me. I could see his railroad folders and his almanacs and his little "books of hundred facts" in a satchel that was open beside him. These are what he uses to gather the information that he expends on me.

If it had been at another time of year, instead of saying, "Cold, isn't it?" the Pullman Man would have said, "Warm, ain't it?" These are his only two greetings.

He gave a look out of the window.

"She's losing time along here," he said. This remark is just a part of his special and technical information about the train. The Man in the Pullman Car calls all trains by their numbers, calls all engineers "he," knows when there is a flat wheel under the express car, knows by instinct when we come to a water tank, can distinguish a village in the pitch dark, and calls the conductor "Charley." Travel, with him, takes on the air of a continued personal distinction.

The Pullman Man opened up a newspaper and lit a cigar.

"How do you think things will begin to shape for the election?"

This means, of course, the presidential election. After all, there is one every four years. For one whole year a man can say, "How do you like the election?" then for another year, "There don't seem to be much talk of the next election yet." And after that it's only two years and the thing rushes to a vortex.

The Pullman Man doesn't really want to know what *I* think about the election. He wants to tell me what *he* thinks about it, or rather, the whole truth about it, all of it personally guaranteed. He *knows* – doesn't guess, he *knows* – the exact result: selection of the candidates, the making of the platform, and the

precise means, known to him alone, by which the whole of New York State will be swept clean.

I could reveal all this if I like. But it would be unfair and might make nation-wide trouble.

Suffice it to say that the whole thing is not only certain, but it is *guaranteed.* The Man in the Pullman Car has offered to pay me, "cash down," a hundred dollars if his forecast is not correct. Where it will be put down, I don't know.

When the election had been reduced to a certainty, the Man in the Car asked me how the big fight suited me, and whether the races down at Jacksonville had suited me, and passed rapidly through a succession of fights, scraps, championships, world series, world's record swims, high dives, flights, and oyster-eating contests. How he remembers all this, I can't conceive. They ought to give courses in this kind of thing at the colleges.

But his range goes further than that.

He pointed to an item in his paper. "I see," he said, "where this guy Mussolini is getting busy again." Then he gave me a brief résumé of European world news. Mussolini, it appears, is a slick guy, but my acquaintance would not be surprised if presently Mussolini got it in the neck.

The King of Spain, nifty though he appears, may get it in the bean at any time; in fact, most of the remaining kings and potentates of Europe may get similar strokes on the bean, neck, or cocoanut any day – except King George, who is all right. What Europe really needs is the introduction of the municipal home rule that they have in my acquaintance's own home town – I forget its name – in the Middle West.

The future of Europe, however, is not a topic of sufficient importance to hold a man's interest very long. The whole place is so obviously doomed that unless it can retrace its steps, introduce the short ballot, with the Oregon system of the recall, the Illinois tax system, and Massachusetts primary law, it will slide over the abyss.

So he changed the topic.

"How did that last Atlantic flight suit you?" he asked. It is always his flattering assumption that the world's events must be trimmed to suit my fancy.

Then he told me about the Atlantic, the real Atlantic, as gathered up into the little "books of handy facts" and absorbed by the Pullman Car Man.

Who could guess, for example, that the Atlantic is 3,160 miles across; that it is 210 feet deep in the shallowest place and 5,300 in the deepest; that if the entire population of the United States

stood side by side and held hands, they would just nicely reach across it; that if the whole population of Trenton, New Jersey, or Akron, Ohio, stood on one another's heads, they would just reach to the bottom of it?

You don't get these things in a college education. Somehow they get left out of it. But now that the Atlantic has been flown across, it has been "put on the map," and the Man in the Car has to have his vital facts about it.

We spent thus a pleasant half hour in discourse together. And then something occurred to spoil it.

Another Man came in.

Now conversation with the Man in the Pullman Car is all right and most agreeable, provided that he has the field to himself. The danger is that there may come in a man with the same equipment as himself, the same range of knowledge, who talks back at him. Then there is trouble – as happened on the day of which I speak.

The second man had hardly had time to unpack his grip and get out his almanacs and his railroad folders when his quick ear caught something.

"Mussolini," he said, "him slick?" And then he proceeded to tell the exact length of time that Mussolini would last among really slick men. I think it was four minutes.

This inevitably suggested the presidential election of the present year: and it came out right away that the whole forecast that the first man had given me, and that he now repeated, was "bunk." The second man, it seems, had just come from the whole of the South and most of the Middle West and the entire Atlantic Seaboard, and he was prepared not only to deny the forecast, but to back up the denial with cash down. I gathered that I was to hold stakes for the two of them, for about forty weeks, at the rate of $1,000 a side.

When I presently left them, they were still in angry dispute, offering a thousand dollars if the presidential election went the other way, guaranteeing that Mussolini would or would not be made King of Austria, putting up money that Erie, Pennsylvania, had more population than Burlington, Iowa, and that the distance across the Atlantic was more, or was less, than 3,000 miles.

I heard afterwards that the train ran off the track after the next station, and that the Pullman Car was rolled down the embankment.

But they probably never noticed it.

## II
## THE CRIMINAL BY PROXY

HERE's a pretty slick one," he said, looking up from his newspaper with a glitter of interest through his spectacles, "about his fellow who got away with the trust funds. Did you see it?"

"No," I said, "I didn't see it."

We were seated side by side in chairs in the hotel rotunda. I didn't know the man; I just happened to be sitting beside him.

"The way it was," he continued, "this fellow seems to have got himself up like a clergyman, see, and then he came in and presented this check drawn on the Orphans' Trust Fund and a letter with it. Of course, the letter was phoney and so was the check. But it was the get-up that fooled them. It seems he got away with a thousand dollars. Pretty slick trick, eh?"

"It certainly was," I answered, "especially as it was orphans' money."

"Sure," he rejoined, burying himself again in his paper.

Presently he looked up again.

"Here's one about a fellow in Albany," he said, "who worked one nearly as good, or perhaps better. He was a mighty smart customer! He came into this bank all dressed up in black and said his mother was dead and asked them to telegraph the bank in a place he called his home town, see, and get him money. Of course, he made out he was all broken up about his mother dying and they sent the message and in about half an hour they got what they thought was an answer saying to give him the money. You see, it wasn't an answer at all! Just a message he got sent to them by a fake messenger boy.

"They give him the money all right, two hundred dollars, and he gets clear away before they get the real answer that the bank don't know him. That was a good one, wasn't it?"

"Excellent," I said. "The man that did that must be a splendid fellow!"

"I'll say so!" said my new acquaintance.

. . . . . .

He sat quiet for a while absorbed in his paper, with little murmurs from time to time such as, "I see the guy in France who choked the two women got clean off." "I see the boys who broke out at Atlanta aren't caught yet." "Well, sir, here's a darned funny one about asphyxiating an old cashier with gas – ain't that a peach?"

. . . . . .

Presently he spoke again.

"What won't these fellers think out next! Hear this. It's from Cedar Springs, Vermont.

" 'Yesterday two men dressed as if for hunting and carrying double-barreled shot-guns and fishing-rods entered the Cedar Springs Central Bank during the noon hour. Their peculiar costume enabled them to approach the president and the cashier without suspicion and to cover them by laying down the guns across the counter. After securing some $10,000 in currency, they tied up the president and the cashier, shoved the money into a fishing-basket, locked the bank door on the outside, and sauntered off into the woods.' That's a good one, isn't it?"

. . . . .

"It certainly is," I said, and I added, "You seem a good deal interested in that sort of thing."

"Well, I do," he answered with a chuckle. "Perhaps I have more humor than most men. But at any rate I can't help admiring the slickness with which these fellers seem to get away with it. It's a caution the kind of dodges they think out. I like to read about them. I can almost forgive these fellows when the thing is ingenious enough. There's an element in it you've got to admire."

"In that case," I said, "listen to this. I don't think it's in your paper. Mine's a second edition. This only happened early this morning; in fact, I heard some one talking about it as I came down in the car."

I read from the paper.

" 'Last night, under pretense of having come in response to a burglar protection automatic alarm,'– that's terribly clever, isn't it? – 'thieves gained access to a chemical warehouse——' "

"A *chemical* warehouse!" the man interrupted. "Well, well, I'm in that business myself."

" ' In Madison Street.' "

"Gosh! that's my street!"

" 'The watchmen of the building were under the impression that they were searching for burglars. The thieves successfully opened a large safe on the fifth floor in which valuable drugs——' "

My acquaintance seized the paper in excitement.

"What's that, show it to me!" he cried. "Great Scott, that's my warehouse! My heavens! they've got away with the stuff in my safe. The dirty hounds! Great Cæsar, what are the police doing! They ought to be hanged for a thing like that! That's criminal! Great Scott, that's *robbery*, plain robbery! . . ."

He had risen, fairly hopping with anger and excitement, and left me to dash across the rotunda. When I last saw him he was careering round the hotel, shouting for a telephone to call up the central police station.

It occurred to me, as I laid down the paper, that the "slickness" of crime depends a good deal on the slant from which you see it.

## III
## THE PEOPLE JUST BACK FROM EUROPE WHO NEVER SHOULD HAVE LEFT HOME

"Yes," said my hostess as she poured me out a cup of tea, "we're back from Europe."

"You were there some time, were you not?" I asked.

"We were on the Continent all summer," she said; "we had a perfectly glorious time!"

"How did you like Paris?" I asked.

"Fine. There were some people from Kentucky in the same hotel with us – the Johnsons from Louisville, perhaps you know them – and we went round with them all the time; and of course we got to know a lot of other Americans through the steamship company and through the hotels and like that."

"The French," I said, "are so easy and agreeable to meet, are they not?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, we met people from all over – from Maine, and from Chicago and from the Middle West, and quite a lot of Southern people, too. In fact, we were quite a cosmopolitan crowd."

"Very much so," I said, "and did you see much of the monuments and the historical things around Paris?"

"Just about everything, I imagine," my hostess replied with animation. "There was an American gentleman from Decatur, Indiana — I think he's professor of French in the Baptist College there — and he took us all round and told us all about everything. He showed us Washington's Monument in the big square and Benjamin Franklin and that tablet there is – perhaps you've seen it – to President McKinley – oh, yes, indeed, we saw everything."

"Of course you saw the pictures——"

"Oh, certainly. There's just a lovely picture done this year by a young girl from the art school in Omaha and they've got it hung up right there in the annual exhibition. We thought it the best thing there."

"I'm sure you did," I said, "and I suppose you liked the restaurants and the French cooking?"

"We did indeed, and, say, we found the cutest little place – it's in the Roo something or other, near that big church where the American Legion went – and they have everything done in real American style. My husband said you couldn't get a better steak in Chicago than what they had there, and they had pancakes and waffles with maple syrup. Really, as we all agreed, we might just as well have been at home."

"But you didn't stay in Paris in the hot weather, did you?"

"Oh, no, we took a trip to Switzerland. We drove in our own car all down the valley of that big river."

"It's beautiful country, isn't it?" I said, "and the people are so interesting."

"Yes, we were with some perfectly lovely people from Memphis, Tennessee – the Edwardses — perhaps you met them – and they had their car, too, and they had some friends (from Buffalo) staying at a place that's just about halfway. And of course these friends introduced us to a lot of Americans that were staying there."

And did you like Switzerland?"

"Yes, ever so much – won't you have some more tea? We found it so hard to get tea the way we like it, over in Europe. Oh, yes, we just loved Switzerland. We saw a ball game in Lucerne – or no, I'm wrong, it wasn't in Switzerland that we saw the ball game. That was in Germany."

"Oh, you went to Germany?"

"Indeed we did. I think we must have been all over it."

"And did you get on all right with the Germans?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. We met some people in Berlin — the Phillipses – that actually came from the same town in Connecticut where my grandmother was raised. It just shows how small the world is."

"It does, indeed," I agreed.

"Oh, but Germany – they're so up to date! It was there that they had the ball games, twice a week, and of course we took them all in. It was just like being back home. And then they had the radio and we listened in on a speech all the way from Philadelphia – just think of it; and they have our moving pictures and quite a lot of American newspapers. In fact, as Pa said, we might just as well have been sitting in New York."

"Just as well. And where else did you go?"

"Oh, we were down in Italy for a while — at Rome and at Venice——"

"Venice is wonderful, isn't it?"

"Yes, isn't it? We were with some people there from Tallahassee, Florida, and they said – these people said – that really when you look at all the lagoons and marshes around where Venice is, it might as well be Tallahassee."

"You didn't go to Spain, I suppose."

"No, we didn't. In fact, we were pretty well warned not to. They say that in Spain it's all Spanish and it's very hard to get around; and so you don't find anybody there. In fact, they told us that there was nobody at all in Spain last year."

"Well," I said, as I rose to take my leave, "I'm sure you've had a most interesting trip. I hope you're going to make some use of it."

"I certainly am," replied the lady brightly, "I'm doing a paper for our *Ladies' Fortnightly Culture Club* on the *National Characteristics of the European Nations.* I've got to have it ready on Friday so I guess I'll have to hustle some."

"You certainly will," I murmured to myself as I went away.

## IV
## THE MAN WITH THE ADVENTURE STORY

"I HAD a pretty narrow shave the other day," he said, as the little group settled themselves into the smoking end of the Pullman.

"Talking of shaves," interrupted one of the others, "I wonder if any of you fellows have seen this new safety razor that you can sharpen without taking it to pieces? It's certainly a peach. But I beg your pardon," he added, "I'm interrupting you. . . ."

"It's all right," said the man. "I was just saying that I had a pretty narrow shave for my life the other day – in fact a matter of touch and go. I'd got off the train away up north at a flag station right out in the bush country where there's such a lot of prospecting and so much talk of deposits of copper and nickel——"

"I see where International Nickel touched a hundred yesterday," said another man, comfortably lighting his pipe.

"You don't say so!" chorused three or four of them, – and then there was a running series of remarks. "I think myself she's good for 200 anyway." – "There's no limit to what they may get out of that." – "I know a man, an engineer, who was all over that property long before they began to develop it and he said twenty years ago that there were millions there. . . ."

It took some time for this little chorus to die down. Then the Adventure Man began again.

"Well, I got off at this place, – it was just getting dusk and I put on my snowshoes for what would be a five-mile tramp anyway, into the camp. I was to walk straight west along the trail and I knew that a man was to come out from the camp to pick me up part way, do you see, for I didn't know just where the new camp was located. The trail struck off into the timber and for the first mile or so it went through big pine trees, thousands of them, all straight as a die, and just as silent and lonesome . . ."

"I've seen the time," interrupted an old man in the corner who hadn't spoken yet, "when you could buy all that pine you wanted at seven dollars, yes, sir, at seven dollars, – right there at the saw mill, or they'd dress it for you at a dollar, and hemlock, the very best of it at three dollars. . . ."

"Not at three dollars!" said one of the listeners increulously. "You mean three dollars a thousand feet?"

"Yes, sir, that's what I do, three dollars a thousand, board measure,"

All men, at least all men who smoke in the end of a Pullman car know about the prices of lumber just as all women know about the prices of dress material. So there broke out another little chorus of interruption.

"Well, I paid forty-five dollars for hemlock when I built my garage." "I can get all the hemlock I want at thirty." "I've seen the time——" and so forth.

Till at last the old man in the corner brought the talk back onto the track by saying to the Adventure Man – "What was you saying about that cheap pine you seen up north?"

"I didn't say it was *cheap* pine," he answered, "I don't know anything about that. I was only talking of a narrow escape I had a while back when I was prospecting up there and started to walk through the bush, – this big pine bush, – just about dark. I hadn't got more than half a mile or so into it," continued the speaker, warming at last to his narration as he felt his audience at last becoming silent, "before I began to feel something about the stillness that began to get me. It was all so quiet, no wind, the trees absolutely stlil, and the white snow with the night shadows falling on it, – there was something spooky about it, something eerie——"

"Did you see where those fellows out on Lake Erie got lost on the ice?" cheerily interrupted a man who hadn't spoken yet. "Certainly a corker, wasn't it."

"I mind the time," said the old man in the corner, "when I've seen the whole of Lake Erie frozen across, right from Port Stanley over to Cleveland."

"For the matter of that," said another, "you take those big lakes up north, even the great big ones, they all freeze solid, – Temagami and Mistassini – all of them."

"They say they'll have a hard time for ice this year, though," said another man, shaking his head, "there were a lot of places where the cut was no good – couldn't get more than eight inches or a foot."

"Well, I don't know," said the man who spoke just before. "Why use lake ice at all? You can get factory ice now nearly everywhere; in our business we're putting in a frozen air plant that will cut out ice altogether."

At this point, just providentially and without design, there fell a little pause and the Adventure Man got started again.

"Well, anyway," he resumed, "I kept going through the bush as hard as I could peg, on my snowshoes, for I knew if I didn't meet the other man before dark I couldn't do it at all. You see after a while the trail wasn't broken at all and it wasn't blazed, – it was just straight going in a compass line. . . ."

Some of the listeners nodded and grunted. The word "compass" caught their fancy for a moment.

"Well, I began to reckon by the distance I had gone that I must pretty soon meet this other man and just then I came to a spot where the trees thinned out a little so that there was a sort of open spot with the last of the daylight showing on it. And there I saw right bang in front of me, say fifty yards away, not one timber wolf but about a dozen of them. They were all packed together, and all working away at something that was lying in the snow. I stood stockstill in my tracks. I didn't dare move. And then just for a minute I got a glimpse of what was lying in the snow, and I can tell you my blood just ran cold when I saw what it was that was attracting those wolves."

The speaker stopped with a dramatic pause, challenging attention. Then he lit his pipe, quietly and firmly, to lend emphasis to what he was going to say. But he was too late.

"I see the Ontario government are going to raise the bounty on wolves," said one of the others quietly.

"I don't think they need to," said another. "As a matter of fact the wolf's pelt is quite worth while in itself. Of course there are some of the timber wolves that are apt to be in poor condition (I'm in the fur business) and you can't use the pelt. But with others there's good value in it."

"They're not in it with fox," said a third man, and there was another chorus, – "I've seen the time when black foxes were as thick——" "I tell you it's all right if you can get them in the

bush, but this fox farm industry is all off." – "All off! Why, there was a fellow down home that got, for a single pair, a single pair mind you, two thousand dollars!"

It took some time for the speakers to remember the Adventure Man. But at last he managed to start again. "I knew it was my turn next," he said. "I had no gun on me, but I had a sheath knife. I reached down quietly and I cut the thongs of the snowshoes. There was a big pine just beside me and by good luck a branch not more than seven or eight feet off the ground. I got all ready for a spring but just at that very moment . . ."

. . . . . .

But just at that very moment the car conductor put his head in through the doorway——

"Ottawa! Ottawa!" he called. "All change, gentlemen."

"Great Cæsar!" exclaimed all the crowd at once. "Ottawa, all ready!!"

And with that they broke, scattered and dissolved.

But no doubt the Man with the Adventure Story is still telling it somewhere, somehow, to somebody.

# SHORT CIRCUITS IN EDUCATION

# ✻ *A Year at College*

## AS REVEALED IN THE NEWER COMIC JOURNALISM

The discovery has recently been made that a college is a comic place. People who were never inside the gates of a university, and who think that a simultaneous equation is a medicine, now spend their time reading the new college comic magazines and building up from them their ideas of what college life is like. After they have read enough about it and seen enough pictures of it, they get crazy to go to the comic college.

Here is what it seems like to such readers:

A college itself is represented by the edge of a beautiful building with little clouds floating past it, and two college girls walking in front of it. One of the girls is called Tootsie and the other is called Maisie, and Tootsie is saying to Maisie:

"*What is the name of your new fiancé?*" and Maisie answering:

"*I don't know. I forgot to ask.*"

If Tootsie and Maisie are not seen walking in front of the college, they are presented sitting up in one of the dormitory rooms. One of them at least always sits on the window-sill and she has a comb in one hand and a looking-glass in the other.

It is really the old picture of the sirens who sat on the rocks to coax Ulysses, but as the man who drew it never went to college, he doesn't know that. And it doesn't matter anyway. The sirens have got nothing on Tootsie and Maisie. They belong with the Nautch girls of Nautchia and the Hitchi-Kitchi girls of the Marquesas Islands. In fact they are all right – except for their passion for repeating little jokes.

"*Why did you let Gussie kiss you last night?*" asks Maisie.

"*Because I didn't know it was Gussie,*" says Tootsie.

After which they go on combing their bobs and eating "fudge." These are the standing occupations of a comic college girl.

If Tootsie and Maisie are not called by those names, they are designated Fitzie and Nessie or Totsie and Flotsie – or, in short, anything that suggests the Marquesas Islands.

Meanwhile, while Tootsie and Maisie are getting ready for their college day, we step across into one of the men's dormitories just the other side of the little clouds, and here, seated also on window-sills are two "College Men" – Gussie and Eddie.

The comic college man has a face cut square, like a strawberry box, a shoulder like a right angle, and a coat shaped like the forty-fifth proposition in Euclid. His face is drawn in a few lines, with the brains left out, and if he ever knew algebra, he gives no sign of it. In short, he is a nut.

When we see them, Nut No. 1, Gussie, is seated on the window-sill playing a ukulele, and Nut No. 2 has his ukulele ready to play as soon as Gussie runs out of ideas and jokes. The college man sleeps with his ukulele.

Gussie and Eddie have apparently the same passion for little dialogue jokes as Tootsie and Maisie. These jokes, a generation ago, were put into the mouths of negroes and were called "coon jokes"; or else they were divided up between "Mike" and "Pat" and called "Irish humor"; but now they are known as "college wit," and every man at college cracks one every ten minutes.

Consequently, when Gussie the Nut has finished his tune on the ukulele, he lays down the instrument and:

Gussie – *"Have a cigarette, old man?"*

Eddie – *"What's wrong with it?"*

Then they take their flasks out of their hip pockets, have a drink, and hit up another tune on the ukulele. This is the way in which the comic college man prepares for his college day.

When the second tune is done and another joke cracked, Gussie and Eddie set out from their room to cross the campus and their walk is always timed so that as they come into one side of the picture, Tootsie and Maisie come into the other.

The campus is represented by two trees and one bird, and a piece of a college window and the edge of a professor's gown, but away in the background are a group of little figures – nuts and sirens drawn very small – which are intended to indicate that something is going on. Most likely there is a college rush, because college life is so arranged that there are "rushes" and "pushes" and "hustles" going on from September to June.

Any one who studies the college in the comic papers knows that the session begins with the big "Freshman rush" that lasts two weeks and is followed by the "Sophomore push" that goes right on till the football "hustle" begins; after that there is the Christmas Rush and the New Year's Hootch, and the "scram" and the "prom" and the "punch," ending with the grand final "rush" at commencement time. All these keep poor nuts Gussie

and Eddie pretty busy with their little ukuleles and their flasks, and Tootsie and Maisie hardly have time to keep their hair done.

When they meet in the morning on the campus, all their eight eyes (they have eight among them) are turned at the same sort of angle, four to meet four. This stands for "college love," and it means that Gussie and Eddie have a "crush" on Tootsie and Maisie, and Tootsie and Maisie have a "smash" on Gussie and Eddie. College love is always pictured as a series of concussions.

When they go past one another, either set of two (whichever has the turn gets off a dialogue joke:

Maisie – *"Don't you think that Gussie looks awfully like Eddie?"*

Tootsie – *"He does. But Eddie doesn't look a bit like Gussie."*

This joke was once considered one of the best in Alabama, but now it has been changed to a piece of college wit.

When they have finished their walk across the campus, Gussie and Eddie and Tootsie and Maisie next appear all seated in a terribly comical place called a classroom, taking part in a comical performance called a "recitation." This is carried on under the guidance of a "professor" or "prof," and everybody who reads the college press knows exactly what he looks like. He has a bald head and a face like a hard-boiled egg with the shell off, held upside down, and much the same expression as the map of Africa.

A recitation apparently consists of another set of "coon jokes" just like the ones used up in the dormitories. Thus:

Gussie (coming in late for the class) — *"What is the Prof. talking about?"*

Eddie – *" I don't know. He hasn't said."*

All through the recitation and the dialogue, Tootsie and Maisie are shooting across the classroom at Gussie and Eddie appreciative smiles and glances that would knock a Marquesas Islander out of a bamboo tree at a hundred yards.

College love moves fast.

In fact, you can see it grow from day to day and from picture to picture. Here are Gussie and Eddie and Maisie and Tootsie at a college dance and Gussie is doing the fox-trot – or the dog-walk – with Tootsie and is saying:

Gussie – *"What would you say if I asked leave to kiss you?"*

Tootsie – *"I'll tell you afterwards."*

Or here they are similarly at an evening reception, or a college "crush," or a "push," or at a "prom," and whatever they are doing the four are always shooting glances at one another

and cracking off dialogue, and when night separates them Gussie and Eddie sit up on their window-sill and play the ukulele and drink out of their flasks, and Maisie and Tootsie eat fudge and comb their bobs.

Oh, there's no doubt it is a great life, the college life. Ever so many people have said that the college "life" is better than the mere study, and I must say I think so too. Give me Tootsie and Maisie and Fitzie and Nessie all around me, and I'll guarantee never to study again.

But meantime the pictures take on a cast that means that the year is drawing to a close. The dialogue jokes now have reference to the "exams," and to Gussie and Eddie, the poor nuts, getting "ploughed," or "flunked" or "plunked," or "dropped out," or "let down," or "tripped up" – or any of the other things that happen to nuts in comic colleges. Such as this:

Tootsie – "*I heard Eddie will have to leave the college.*"

Maisie – "*No, the college will have to leave Eddie.*"

Or else:

Maieis – "*What degrees is Gussie going to take?*"

Tootsie – "*About ninety degrees Fahrenheit. He's got to work in a coal mine.*"

All this stands for final scholarship. With it are another set of little jokes that indicate the culmination and crown of college love.

Maisie – "*Are you and Gussie engaged?*"

Tootsie – "*No, but he is.*"

And then, just as we expected, there duly appears the presentation of the final comic event of Graduation Day, with Maisie and Tootsie in graduation gowns straight from the Marquesas Islands and the two nuts with high collars on (the kind they use in Spain to kill criminals) and flat mortarboards, and they are all going to get their degrees after all, and they are all going to get married, and play the ukulele and live happily ever afterwards.

It's a great life, this college stuff.

So let us bless the new comic magazine, after all. It has performed once again the magic literary trick of making the picture better than the reality. I am all for it.

## ✻ *The Unintelligence Test*

### WHAT A WELL-EQUIPPED MAN OUGHT TO KNOW

A GREAT American banker, speaking the other day in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (it was not his fault), talked of the requirements of modern banks and the type of man needed. "We don't want," he said, "young men who come to us thinking that they know it all; young men who have studied banking in a correspondence course and suppose that they understand it. We want men who will begin with us from the beginning. The less they know, the better."

In the same way, one of our biggest railway men (290 pounds) is reported as saying recently: "We don't want young men who know anything about a railroad when they come to us. I'd rather take in a boy who didn't know one end of a box car from another, than a boy who had 'studied railroading.' "

On the same topic, a leading steamship man spoke with something like heat, or at least, steam: "We can't get the young men we want. They are not ignorant enough."

And the president of a steel company: "They know too much. When I entered the steel business, I knew nothing. I couldn't even add up a column of figures; I still can't. How is it that we can get no young men like that to-day?"

In fact, in one shape or other, the same cry goes up all over the country.

. . . . .

So it occurred to me that it might be a good thing to try to meet this demand at the source and stop it. I have, therefore, opened a bureau – or rather I am just going to open a bureau – where young men properly disqualified may find unsuitable occupation.

My plan is something like this. First of all, I intend to sift out the candidates by a series of questionnaires. These are based on the different sets of questions that I see in all periodicals proposed as tests of how much people ought to know. The only difference is that my questions are a little more advanced, more technical. They will run something as follows:

EFFICIENCY QUESTIONNAIRE

*How Many of the Following Questions Can You Answer? Write Plainly. Use Ink. Enclose Ten Cents.*

(1) Who is President of the United States?

(2) How many legs has a dog?

(3) What large country is situated between Canada and Mexico?

(4) What is the French for the following: adieu, omelette, pâté de foie gras?

(5) What relation is the Prince of Wales to his father, George V?

(6) How much is 1 and 1?

. . . . .

All the applicants will be put through a thorough drill on questions of this sort. If they show any signs of answering them, they are out of it at once and I go no further.

But if the candidates have been thus drilled and brought to a high pitch of equipment, there is just one other detail to which I shall attend before sending them out into the world. They must not ask for money. I notice that all the great authorities I have just quoted – the railway presidents, and the bankers, and so on – lay stress on this. Young men, they say, must not be anxious about their initial salary. They must start low.

My young men are going to start so low that they will be right down on their uppers.

. . . . .

Then when I get them into shape, I will send them out with letters of recommendation composed in the following fashion:

THE NEW EFFICIENCY

*Sample Letter of Presentation for Young Man Entering Bank*

To the President,

The First, or Last, National Bank.

Dear Sir:

Allow me to present to you as an applicant for suitable employment my young friend, Mr. Edward Edwin Beanhead. He is anxious to fill a post in your bank. Mr. Beanhead assures me that he has never been inside a bank in his life, but thinks that he would know a bank if he saw it, and in any case would soon get to recognize one at sight. Mr. Beanhead knows absolutely nothing of money, has no knowledge of bookkeeping, and can

not count. As to salary, just give him what he is worth, no more. I enclose a list of questions whose answers he doesn't know.

P.S. Don't let him into the safe, he couldn't get out.

. . . . .

*Letter of Commendation*
*for*
*Young Man Entering a Railway*

To the President of the American Pacific Railway (or, give it to the Ohio Central, or the Trans-Siberian if you can't use it).

This is to commend to your consideration a young man filling all requirements for railroad services as laid down by yourself and others. He is anxious to enter the service of a railway – either steam or horse, he doesn't care. I asked him if he knew one end of a box car from the other, and he answered, "Which end?" So I think he comes up to standard. But be careful not to run over him.

P.S. I can send his pedigree if you want it.

. . . . .

The recommendations of the bureau that I wish to establish will not be confined entirely to brain-workers. It will include also those without brains, who apply for positions not involving work. For example, I am prepared right at the start to offer an applicant for the post of night-watchman, as in the form letter below:

MESSRS. TOUCH & GOE
Warehouse & Storage Agents.

Dear Sirs:

I recommend to you the bearer of this letter for the position of night-watchman. His special qualification is that he has no watch and falls asleep so early that he never sees night. But he has a quick native intelligence, and all you have to do is to teach him to read and write and give him something to keep him awake. Then show him the planet Jupiter and tell him to keep his eye on it, and he'll watch for you as long as you like. You need pay him nothing for the first ten years. He doesn't need to eat.

. . . . .

Of course, I've only just explained the system in mere outline. But I really think that once I get it going it will revolutionize our industry – a thing that has to be done about once every six months to keep it going.

## ✻ *Easy Ways to Success*

### A LETTER TO A PARLOR BOLSHEVIK JUST OUT OF COLLEGE

My Dear Clarence:

I gather from your letter that you have just come out of college and are about to launch yourself upon the world. You rightly feel that there is something coming to you after your brilliant success at the university. The high rank which you took in English Composition, in Salesmanship, and in Comparative Religion ought, as you say to yourself, to open for you an easy road to success.

You draw my attention to the "mediocre caliber" – the words are yours – of the men who succeed in this unjust world. What, you ask, do they really amount to? Exactly. They don't. Their so-called success, as you put it, is merely due to the accident and injustice of the capitalistic bourgeoisistic system under which the mass of the proletariat are exploited by the privileged classes who fatten on the poor.

And you want some of it yourself.

Precisely so, and as I am most anxious to help you, perhaps you will allow me to give you a few directions for exploiting the proletariat. It is terribly simple. I give you one of the very easiest, the most elementary, first.

#### HOW TO MAKE A FORTUNE IN REAL ESTATE

Select a piece of ground anywhere close to a large city, and lying in the direction in which the city is about to grow. Avoid land where the city is not going to grow. In buying the land, be careful to pay for it only a very small sum. Sometimes real estate of this sort is bought for a song; so you may, if you like, see what you can do by singing.

After buying your land, hold it for at least three days. It is this careful holding of the land which makes the money. After holding it three days, mark it out into squares and sell it for building apartments on. Sell it for an enormous price.

Then buy another piece of land, hold it for three days, and sell it.

It's wonderfully simple, isn't it? Clarence? — only there is just one thing that perhaps I ought to mention. Be just a little careful about the land you buy. With your wonderful education, you are sure to know all about it, but you might just happen to make a mistake. And that would be too bad.

In fact, Clarence, on second thought, I *don't* believe I'll put you into real estate. It's too tricky. I think you had better go into the stock market. There, of course, you are bound to succeed. As you yourself say in your letter, most of the so-called magnates in the so-called money market who are heralded as so-called kings of finance are really men of no real insight whatever. They merely fatten on the poor.

So if you want to fatten on the poor yourself a little bit, the directions are very simple. Try this method.

### HOW TO MAKE MONEY ON THE STOCK MARKET

Take any daily newspaper and turn to the stock exchange page. You will, after a little practice, easily recognize it by the fact that it is full of queer little figures. With your trained brain, you will soon learn to distinguish it from the cattle market page.

Having got the right page, look down the list of stocks and select one which is about to rise. When stocks rise slowly and gradually, others very sharply and suddenly. For your purpose, select a stock which is about to rise sharply. Estimate for yourself how much money you would like to make and divide this sum by the amount of increase which the stock is about to undergo. This calculation will give you the number of shares which you need to buy in order to obtain the amount of money which you need.

But stop, Clarence, I believe I am wrong again. I forgot that you haven't got that $10,000 to start with; and you know how tight and selfish the so-called banks are with their so-called money.

Let's try something else.

### HOW TO MAKE A FORTUNE IN A MERGER

Look carefully all around for two big enterprises that need merging and don't know it. One good way is to get hold of two large railroads and join them into one small one. Another scheme is to go round and gather the whole of an industry into the hollow of your hand and then close it. And another is to lay pipe-lines to carry anything – any sort of product – to where it

has never been carried and then open up the top end of the pipe-line.

All these things are so ridiculously and so selfishly simple that I share your feeling of indignation against the men who have made colossal fortunes (out of the poor) by doing them.

But I am afraid, Clarence, that we must try something else. All these things I have just named take such a lot of time; you'd be over thirty before you really got the world at your feet. We must find some quicker way of getting at the poor than that.

### HOW TO SUCCEED ON A CHICKEN FARM

Have you ever been attracted, as I have. Clarence, at the idea of getting back to the land, leading a real life close to nature, and at the same time not far from a savings bank?

Perhaps you have thought of chickens. In New York alone, one million of eggs are eaten for breakfast, and eggs cost five cents; one chicken lays 200 eggs a year; shake it up well and it will do even better; and it only eats – I forget how little – but say next to nothing. The profit on the thing is obvious, isn't it, and colossal?

But I am afraid that you may object – I am sure that you *will* object – that the farm life is too deadening to your soul, not sufficiently intellectual. If so, what do you say to art or literature? There is an attraction for any one who is naturally a good penman in making a fortune out of writing.

### HOW TO MAKE A FORTUNE BY WRITING

If then you decide to make your success by writing, I should recommend to you to write poetry. A good market price for poetry is twenty-five cents a word, and a rapid writer like yourself ought to be able to write thirty words a minute; everything, of course, depends upon speed, but I think you may rate yourself at thirty words, or $7.50 a minute.

This, as you remark, is not much, and I admit that Mr. Ford and Mr. Rockefeller and others most unfairly get more than this and yet write very slowly. Nevertheless, accept the figures as they are; you will see that poetry works out at, say $45 an hour.

Assuming that poets, not being under union rules, work ten hours a day; this will give you $450 per diem. You object, no doubt, that, after all, this means a very laborious life, involving not only constant work but constant observation of nature, accurate records of weather and scenery, and so forth.

### THE HIGH PROFITS OF ART

This being so, you might be inclined, my dear Clarence, to consider some other branch of Art, equally exalted, but less laborious than writing poetry. What do you say to portrait-painting? After your first-year course in geometrical drawing and your diploma in advertising, I am sure you would find no trouble in painting a portrait.

A good portrait, with absolutely first-class colors, high-grade canvas, and a liberal coating of shellac on it, sells for $3,000. As against this, you must offset the cost of your canvas – at least $1; your paint – say three canfuls at fifty cents a gallon; your shellac, at fifty cents a pint; and your net return is cut down to $2,997.

### BETTER WORK ON A FARM

In short, my dear Clarence, When I look around you, I find it very hard to give you any advice that can lift you out of your present perplexities. It seems that all the people who have succeeded in front of you have had some sort of advantage. Thomas Edison came along just when people began to need electric light; Henry Ford hit exactly the moment when motor cars were wanted.

Do you know, I think that perhaps, Clarence, the best thing for you to do is to try the old-fashioned plan of getting a job on a farm at $20 a month with your board, or starting as a schoolteacher at $40 a month? Has it ever occurred to you that that may be about your size? Your own city was advertising yesterday for twenty "good men on sewers." Perhaps you would be a peach in a sewer. Go and try it. You'll feel more contented anyway.

## ✻ *Fun as an Aid to Business*

### IS A SENSE OF HUMOR A FINANCIAL ASSET?

IT IS VERY commonly supposed that to laugh in adversity, to joke over poverty and, if need be, to chuckle in the penitentiary, is the mark of a fortunate and superior mind. But the question still remains whether the man who possesses a sense of

humor is better off financially for having it. Does it help or hinder?

We always talk of "getting down to cold business," "cutting out the funny stuff," and of "quitting monkeying," as if all laughter and fun and monkeys were contrary to the spirit of business. Nor is it regarded as a compliment to tell a man that his proposition is a joke and that his offer makes us laugh. Is not a young man in an office warned not to "get too fresh" and not to "try to get gay"? Indeed, is it not the man who has lost his job or whose business has failed who is invited to console himself with his sense of humor?

On the other hand, in the new realm of activity that is called Salesmanship, there seems to be a persistent idea that if you get a man sufficiently amused, you can sell him anything. One laugh and he is lost.

Now, I know nothing about Salesmanship. I don't think I could even sell a copy of the Harvard Classics to a retired banker in Iowa. Nevertheless, I am given to understand that amusement is supposed to work somewhat as follows:

. . . . .

The Salesman enters the Business Man's office and says to him:

"It is my intention to sell you one thousand hanks of No. 6 thread manufactured by the company that I represent."

The Business Man snorts.

"Oh, I don't want you to buy any *now*," answers the Salesman. "Wait till I've told you that one about the traveling man and the college professor."

Five minutes later the Business Man, suffocating with laughter, signs an order for not one thousand, but for *five* thousand, hanks of thread.

On the strength of this ancient and worn-out fiction, many an unhappy young man wanders round the country as a commercial traveler trying to be funny, to pass himself off as a merry dog so full of humor that he couldn't be dishonest if he tried.

I think the whole idea is wrong. I find that the men who can sell me encyclopedias are the men who suggest that there is some strange, mysterious purpose in their personality. Such a man looks at me with penetrating power and says in a voice that Forbes Robertson might envy, "I have here an encyclopedia," – and when he says it that way I am sunk.

It is just the same idea as with the Ancient Mariner, when he

stopped the stranger and held him back even on his way to a wedding feast.

*'He holds him with his skinny hand,*
*"He holds him with his glittering eye."*

Now, that ancient mariner if he went "on the road" would be worth fifty dollars a day.

I remember once having had a personal experience of the same thing – of the convincing power of earnestness rather than levity. It was late at night on a dark street. I was met and accosted by a gigantic man, very evidently from his build and from the accent of his speech, A Highlander. Like all Highlanders, he used the personal pronouns in a way unknown to other nations.

He took me by the coat.

"She will be Dougall McDougall!" he said, "and she will want ten cents to buy a drink."

"Yes," I answered, "and she will get it too." And she did.

On the other hand, if that man had said, as most of my friends who meet me say, "I heard a rather funny story the other day, I wonder if you've heard it," are not the chances, shall we say, that I would already have heard it?

But in one way a sense of humor can be of real use in modern business life. It can serve as a corrective of bunk about "service" and "helpfulness" – all the "brother-brother" stuff that is spreading like an infection to-day.

I don't know who started this. I suppose in a sense we are all brothers. So are the monkeys. But the plain truth is that when a man is doing business, he is not trying to be a brother to anybody – except to himself.

Here are one or two samples of what I mean. I admit that I made them up because I found it a little quicker than looking up actual examples. I admit too that they may be a little exaggerated – though I doubt it – for to a considerable extent, the kind of thing that appears in all the advertising pages of the magazines is of this sort.

SAMPLE NO. 1

*Letter from a Firm of Calciminers and House Painters Soliciting Business – or no, I beg their pardon – Offering Help.*

MR. FELLOW CITIZEN:

"Is your Home a little dark and gloomy? Do you sometimes look at the blank walls in front of you? If so, let us help you. All we ask is to serve. We know your troubles so well, and feel that we can be of use. Have you ever thought of the effect of a

sunset pink in your living-room? And your kitchen? Would you like us to tell you how a coating of thin sky blue – our own cobalt blue – brought happiness to one Home? We wonder if you would care to see our little booklet PAINT AND PUNK? We should so love to send it to you. May we? We only want to help lift a little bit of the burden?"

SAMPLE NO. 2

Here is another.

*Letter from a firm of Patent Ice-Box Manufacturers offering to send up "their Mr. Smith" to my House.*

DEAR MR. HOUSEOWNER:

"What about a new ice-box? The old one not working very well, eh? Well, then, suppose you let us send up our Mr. Smith to the House. Down here we call him *'The man who knows about* ice. 'Just remember that. He knows – and he wants to tell YOU.

"Won't you let him come to you? Won't you perhaps let him fetch along a sample of our new iceless ice-box and give a demonstration? Why not bring in the kiddies and let them see it all too? They'll love our Mr. Smith. And he won't try to rush you into buying anything, either. He'll just tell you all you want to know in his own chatty, cheerful way.

"Your home will seem all the brighter when he comes. Service – that's all he stands for, and, as he says himself, 'an ice that will give to the consumer 100 per cent of satisfaction for a minimum of cost.' That's the way he talks. Just as clever as that."

Now this kind of thing would be all right if it were sent out by the Life Boat Mission of the Salvation Army. But as addressed by one ordinary business person to another, it is heart-rending!

And yet, after all, it seems that the world likes a little bit of kindiness, the "touch of nature that makes the whole world kin"; and likes, by force of association, the person or the thing with which the kindliness is connected. Indeed, if a "sense of humor" means, as it should, something genial and kindly, something "human" in the best and largest sense, then perhaps it is, after all, one of the best "business assets" that a man can have.

In other words, the beginning part of this essay is all wrong.

## ✻ *The Stamp-Album World*

### THE HABITABLE GLOBE AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF THE JUVENILE COLLECTOR

THE Earth or Globe, on which we collect stamps, is organized by the International Postal Union, which divides it up into countries. The Postal Union turns on its axis every twenty-four hours, thus creating day and night.

The principal countries of the world are Cochin-China, the Gilbert Islands, Somali Land, the Gaboon, the Cameroons, Nankipu, Johore, and Whango-Whango. Alongside of these great stamp areas are others of less importance, whose stamps are seldom if ever worth more than four cents, such as the United States, Great Britain, Canada, France, etc.

Some of these countries, however, are of importance as exercising a control over the stamps of places of the first rank. Thus, England comes into prominence as having been recognized by the Postal Union as controlling Sarawak, Uganda, Inhambane, Irac, and other great centers. Similarly, the Philippine Islands, after centuries of misgovernment were transferred by the Postal Union to the United States and Portugal. The Portuguese, of no account in themselves, they are known, all over the world, as issuing stamps of Lorenço Marques.

The Stamp Book can teach us, among other things, the reason and origin of government and how it comes into being. Whenever a part of the earth contains a sufficient number of people to need stamps, the people all get together and join in forming a government the purpose of which is to issue stamps.

If the stamps are to have a man's head as the design, the country is placed under a king, the person selected for the king having the kind of features needed for a stamp. The British Royal family makes such excellent stamps that it is thought that they will be kept at the head of Great Britain for a long time to come. On the other hand, the Emperor of Brazil had to be deposed in 1889, his whiskers being too large to go through the Post.

In other countries, it is decided that the Goddess of Liberty has a more beautiful face than a king, and so these countries

are called republics and they elect a new stamp every few years. Sometimes, when a face design is wanted, a competition is held. Years ago the Goddess of Liberty came from Cedar Rapids High School, Iowa, and last year one was got from Bangor, Maine. But generally speaking, the Goddess of Liberty does not exist, but is just made up.

Any boy who is fortunate enough to possess a stamp album takes a new interest in geography and must often wish he could take a trip around the world. No doubt in his mind he often imagines such a voyage.

Sailing, let us say, from the harbor of New York (which is of no importance, as it issues no stamps), he passes after a few days' sail the great islands Trinidad and Tobago, which issued their first stamps in 1881, and catches a glimpse of the coast of Dutch Guiana, which issues a half-gulden orange stamp of great beauty.

Striking westward across the Atlantic, he sees Teneriffe from the ocean (with a two-cent Spanish issue), and near it Funchal, whose stamps issued in 1892 carry a picture of the king of Portugal.

His journey now carries him southward past the Gold Coast, Ascension, Dahomey, Angola, Anjouan, Whango-Whango and other great world centers.

Rounding Africa, he catches sight of Madagascar (Republique Francaise, 10 centimes), Diego Suarez Djibouti, and some of the principal places in the world.

As he crosses the Indian Ocean, he finds himself, to his renewed enchantment, in the land of Oriental wealth, the Indies. Here he disembarks on the soil of India and visits the great centers of Ghopal, Bussahir, Chamba, Charkari, Nowanuggar, and Jaipur. Here his album leads him to the scene of the great battles fought by the British Military Postal Authorities (1 shilling, very rare) and Burmese Expeditionary Force.

Leaving on his left Macao and on his right the Caicos Islands, he reaches the territory of the Chinese Expeditionary Force Military Commissariat Postal Service and the area represented by the Japanese Interim arrangement for the Korean Postal Despatch.

Sailing on eastward across the Pacific, the traveler gets a glimpse of the Guam, Ding-Dong, Tahiti, Pingo-Pongo, and Houtchi-Koutchi Islands, and having thus seen the whole world, he passes through the Panama Canal and thus arrives at his home.

Nor is it only in geography that we find our minds illumin-

ated by the study of our stamp book. It opens for us the pages of our history.

Consider, for example, the history of the British settlements in North America. At the end of what is called the colonial period in American history, there was great dissatisfaction over what was called the Stamp Act, which compelled all the people to use stamps made in England.

As a result, Thomas Jefferson designed the Declaration of Independence, which said, "When in the course of human events, a country gets large enough to have stamps of its own, it becomes a free and independent state and deserves to be recognized as such by the International Postal Union."

Even the most recent history can be understood if examined in the light of the stamp album. Thus in the year 1914 there broke out what is called the Great War, which began between the German Imperial Field Kitchen and the French Commissariat Parcel Post.

Inevitably other countries were drawn in: first of all the British Expeditionary Force (one penny), and then the Austro-Hungarian K. and K. Post (20 Pfennig), and then the Italian Posta della Gherra and other powers. Presently the Canadian Expeditionary Force (two cents) joined in the World War, and the final advent of the United States Army Post (three cents) brought the struggle to its climax.

The final result of the war was the issuance of a five-cent stamp by the League of Nations.

One of the chief advantages of the stamp album is that it brings us to an intimate knowledge of some of the great men of the modern times whose faces and names are recognized by the Postal Union as official designs for stamps. Here is Prince Ferdinand of Lichtenstein, one of the chief sovereigns of the world; here General Bingerville of the Ivory Coast; and here Marshall Spudski of Polish Paraguay.

Some of the faces and names leave us perhaps in a little doubt, but a little imagination will always help us through. Here is a beautiful design of the Panama Canal Zone representing, we presume, Theodore Roosevelt wading across the Panama River and waving the Portuguese flag. Here is King Edward the Seventh, dictator of Nyassaland, eating a giraffe; and the great French soldier and statesman, Marshall Foch, sitting on a velocipede in Oubanguichari-Tchad in the North Central French Congo, Republique Francaise, ten centimes, poste militaire du Congo, 1915.

# SHORT CIRCUITS BY RADIO AND CINEMA

## ✻ *If Only We Had the Radio Sooner*

### BROADCASTING THE NORMAN CONQUEST

*The scene is laid in the castle of Count Guesshard de Discard of Normandy, one of the companions of William the Conqueror. It takes place in the "bower" of Lady Angela de Discard, a stone room with open slots for windows, rather inferior to a first-class cow-stable. There are tapestries blowing against the walls, sheepskin rugs on the floor and wooden stools. But in one corner of the room there stands a radio receiving apparatus, and on the wall is a telephone.*

*In the bower are Lady Angela de Discard and her daughter Margaret of the Rubber Neck.*

Lady Angela speaks: I wonder when we shall have news from England and hear whether Cousin William has killed Cousin Harold.

Lady Margaret of the Rubber Neck: By my halidome, Mamma, I think there ought to be something on the radio this morning. Papa said that Cousin William and Cousin Harold had both agreed to get the broadcast on as early in the day as possible.

Lady Angela: Is it so, by Heaven! Then I pray you, by God's grace, turn on the radio.

*(Lady Margaret of the Rubber Neck goes to the radio and starts turning the dials. There ensues a strange sound as of some one singing and wailing, and the music of a harp.)*

Lady Angela: Heaven's grace!

Lady Margaret: I'm afraid, Mamma, it is one of those Welsh bards. I think he is singing the sorrows of his country. I must have got Plynlimmon or Anglesea by mistake.

Lady Angela: Heavens! Shut him off. I thought that Cousin Harold promised to have all the Welsh bards killed. I know that Cousin William, just as soon as he has killed Cousin Harold, means to kill the bards. Do try again. I am getting so interested to know whether your father gets killed or not.

*(Lady Margaret tries again. There is this time a wild and confused rush of sound. She shuts off the radio at once.)*

Lady Angela: Odds Bones! What's that?

Lady Margaret: I'm so sorry, Mamma; I think it was a Scottish concert. I'm afraid I really don't know from what station the battle is to come. You see, Cousin William and Cousin Harold were to select the ground after the landing.

Lady Angela: Then, for the love of Moses, call up on the telephone and find out.

Lady Margaret: I'm so sorry, Mamma. So help me, I never thought of it.

*(Lady Margaret of the Rubber Neck goes to the telephone. As she talks, the answering voice of the operator can be heard, rather faintly in the room.)*

Hello!

(Hello!)

Is that the Central?

(In truth, it is!)

Wilt thou kindly impart information touching a matter on which I am most anxious to receive intelligence?

(In certain truth I will an so be it is something of which this office hath any cognizance.)

You will certainly put me under a deep recognaissance.

(Speak on, then.)

I will.

(Do.)

That will I.

(What is it?)

It is this. I am most curious to know if any broadcast or general exfusion of intelligence is yet received of the expedition of Duke William of Normandy.

(Truly indeed, yes, by Heaven, certainly. Even now the exfusion is about to come over the radio.)

*(Lady Margaret with a few words, not more than a hundred, of hasty thanks, hangs up the telephone and again turns on the radio.*

*This time a clear voice with a twentieth-century accent is heard beginning to announce.)*

Announcer: Good morning, folks! Gee! You're lucky to be on the air this morning. . . .

Lady Angela: Tune him a little more; I don't get him.

Lady Margaret (*fumbling with the radio*): It's because it's an Announcer. I heard Father Anselm say that the announcers are born a thousand years ahead of their time, though how that can be I know not. In any case it is agreed, they say, that the Saxons are to have the broadcasting rights, and Cousin William is to

have the moving pictures. Now, wait a minute—— Heaven's grace, that's that Welsh bard again.

Lady Angela: Silence him.

Lady Margaret: There, now, I've got it.

*(The Radio begins to talk again. The voice that speaks is as of the twentieth century like the voice of one "announcing" a football game.)*

Announcer: Now, folks, this is Senlac Hill, and we're going to put a real battle on the air for you, and it's going to be some battle. The principals are Harold, King of England – lift your helmet, Harold – and William, the Dook, or as some call him, the Duck, of Normandy. Both the boys are much of a size, both trained down to weight, and each has got with him as nice a little bunch of knights and archers as you'd see east of Pittsburgh. Umpires are: for Harold, the Reverend Allbald of the Soft Head, Archbishop of Canterbury; for William, Odo the Ten-Spot, Bishop of Bayeux. Side lines, Shorty Sigismund and Count Felix Marie du Paté de Foie Gras. Referee, King Swatitoff of Sweden, ex-Champion of the Scandinavian League. Battle called at exactly ten A.M. They're off. The Norman boys make a rush for the hill. .Harold's center forwards shoot arrows at them. William leads a rush at the right center. Attaboy, William! That's the stuff! Harold's boys block the rush. Two Norman knights ruled off for interference. William hurls his mace. Forward pass. Ten-year penalty. Quarter time.

*(The radio stops a minute.)*

Lady Margaret: How terrifically exciting! Do you think we are winning?

Lady Angela: It's very hard to tell. I've often heard your father say that in the first quarter of a battle they don't really get warmed up.

*(The radio starts.)*

Announcer: Battle of Senlac. Second quarter. Change of ground. Duke William has won the west end. The Normans make a rush against the left center. Hand-to-hand scrimmage with Harold's front line. Many knights unhorsed and out of the game. Several men hurt on both sides. Count Guesshard de Discard receives a crack on the bean with a mace.

Lady Margaret: Oh, Mamma, papa got one on the bean.

Lady Angela (*laughing*): He certainly did. I can just see your papa's face when some one landed him one!

Lady Margaret: What happens to you, Mamma, if papa gets knocked out?

Lady Angela: I believe that Cousin William has promised to

give me to one of his knights. I don't think it's settled yet who gets me. They generally raffle, you know. But stop, we're missing the battle!

*(The radio continues.)*

Announcer: Second half of the game. Both sides rested up during half time. Duke William attacks the center. Man hurt. Battle stops, substitute replaces. Battle continues. William's entire cavalry rides at the hill. Harold's boys heaving rocks. Swatitoff, the referee, knocked down by the cavalry. Umpires whistle. General melee. Battle degenerating into a fight. William's men ride off apparently in full flight. Norman boys retreating everywhere. Harold's men rushing down hill at them. Battle all in Saxon's favor. The noble Harold driving the foul Normans off the field. Listen, folks, and . . .

*(At this moment something goes wrong with the radio. It sinks to a mere murmuring of squeaks.)*

Lady Angela: The ungodly radio is off!

*(Lady Margaret tries in vain to fix the radio. It won't work. While she works at it a long time passes. It is not till she has sent for a Norman carpenter with a sledge-hammer and a crowbar that the radio works again. When it does it is late in the afternoon. Then at last it speaks . . .)*

Announcer: Battle all over. The foul Saxon, Harold, lies dead across the fifty-yard line with his whole center scrimmage dead round him. Spectators leaving in all directions in great haste. The noble William is everywhere victorious. Norman crowd invading the club house. Number of injured and dead knights being piled up at the side of the field. Among the dead are Count Roger the Sardine, Count Felix Marie de Paté de Foie Gras, the Seneschal Pilaffe de Volaille and Count Guesshard de Discard. . . .

Lady Margaret: Ah, do you hear that, Mamma? Odd's life, papa's killed. That must have been that smack on the bean. I had a notion that papa would get it, didn't you?

Lady Angela (*picking up a little steel mirror and adjusting her cap*): Oh, I was sure of it. A juggler prophesied it to me last Whitsuntide. I wonder which of the knights Cousin William will give me to. . . .

## ✻ *What the Radio Overheard*

### AN EVENING AT HOME OF THE UPTOWN BROWNS

I

The scene is in the dining-room of the house of Mr. Uptown Brown. It is a large room with a mahogany table and a mahogany sideboard and all the things that ought to be in the dining-room of people called Uptown Brown.

In a corner is a radio machine of the best and newest type with leather armchairs beside it and on a little wooden seat printed papers with announcements and programs. The time is evening, an hour or so after dinner, and the people who appear are Miss Flossie Fitzclippet Brown, the Only Girl in All the World, and Mr. Edwin Overflow, the Only Man in the Universe. But they have not yet told this to one another.

Flossie (*as they come to the dining-room*): There's nobody in here. Wouldn't you like to come in, and I'll show you our new radio?

Mr. Overflow (*in a deep voice, charged with static*): With pleasure.

Flossie: How dark it is! The switch is over there. Won't you please push it on?

Mr. Overflow (*with more static*): With pleasure.

Flossie: Now sit here and make yourself terribly comfy, and I'll turn on the radio.

Mr. Overflow (*speaking with a compressed voltage, which ought to warn any girl that there is something atmospheric doing*): With pleasure.

Flossie (*at the radio*): Now wait a minute. I never can remember which way these silly dials go – let me see. Do you understand how to do it, Mr. Overflow?

Mr. Overflow (*at a pressure of 200 atmospheres to the inch*): Not at all.

Flossie (*fingering the dial*): I think this is the one and I think you turn it so——

The Radio: Squa-ark——! ! !

FLOSSIE (*shutting it off*): No, that's wrong, I'm sure. I'll try this other way.

MR. OVERFLOW (*rising from his place and putting forward his antennæ as if about to make a contact*): Please don't!

FLOSSIE: Don't what? (*She turns off the dial.*)

MR. OVERFLOW: Don't turn on the radio. There's something I want to say, something I've been trying to say all evening——

FLOSSIE (*who has been trying to make him say it all evening*): To me?

MR. OVERFLOW: Yes, to you. Miss Brown—— (*He stops with a static congestion in his feed pipe.*)

FLOSSIE: Yes?

MR. OVERFLOW: Miss Brown—— (*He pauses; then with an effort he connects in on a better wave length.*) Miss Brown, Flossie, ever since I've been coming to this house——

FLOSSIE: I wonder if I can get Atlanta.

MR. OVERFLOW: Don't.

THE RADIO (*in agony*): SQUA-ARK——

MR. OVERFLOW: Turn it off. Listen. Miss Brown – Flossie – ever since – that is to say – please don't turn it on – Flossie – I only wanted to say – I love you. (*He reaches out both his antennæ.*)

FLOSSIE: Oh, Edwin! (*They make a contact and are joined in a short circuit. Connected thus, they sit down beside the radio. Their hands are joined as they sit in close conversation. Not a sound comes from the radio. It is listening, and is having a good time all by itself.*)

FLOSSIE: But how can you really love me? You've only known me three weeks.

EDWIN (*speaking now with far less strain on his aerial, owing to the removal of all atmospheric disturbance*): Three weeks and one day and four hours.

FLOSSIE: Oh, Edwin, how can you remember?

EDWIN: Remember – can I ever forget it? That first afternoon when I met you crossing the park – and——

FLOSSIE: Oh, Edwin!

EDWIN: Flossie!!

Ten minutes later Edwin is still saying – "And do you remember the day when I took you and your mother to the matinée?" And Flossie answers with a light laugh – "And mother would talk to you all the time." – "Yes, I was wishing your mother was in Jericho!" — "How nice of you, dearest!!"

Twenty minutes later Flossie is saying – "Edwin, dear, I'm afraid we simply must go back to the drawing-room again.

They'll have finished their cards and mother will be wondering where we are. Wait a minute till I turn on the radio——"

THE RADIO: SQUA-ARK——

FLOSSIE: Kiss me, darling. I'm so happy! And isn't the radio just wonderful!

. . . . .

So they go upstairs to the drawing-room, and up there when they arrive there are two tables full of people playing bridge. At one of them Flossie's mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Uptown Brown, and her father and two other people are playing and they have just thrown down their cards because their first rubber is over and Flossie goes up to her mother and kisses her and Flossie's mother kisses her and says:

"Where have you been, darling?"

"Downstairs listening to the radio."

"How is it working?"

"Perfectly."

Flossie's mother knows quite well where Flossie has been, and she wouldn't have interrupted her for the world. But what she really means is, "Did you land him?" And when Flossie says, "Perfectly," she knows that her mother knows and her mother knows she knows what she means.

At the other table, Flossie's brother, Edward Wiseguy Brown, a college radio expert, is playing cards, with a cigarette permanently a part of his face, and he says without even turning his head round:

"What did you get, Floss?"

"Oh, I don't know——"

"Atlanta?"

"I think it may have been."

"Did you get Yomsk in Siberia?"

"Oh, gracious no!"

"Did you get *anything* worth while?"

"I don't think so – that is——" and here she looks over at Edwin for a second and he happens to be looking at her and they both get extremely red, and the whole room gets charged with ecstatic electricity. In fact, it is a relief to everybody when Flossie's father, Mr. Uptown Brown, rises and says to the other man at his table:

"Here, let these two young people take our places, Tommie, and you and I will drop out a bit."

On which Mr. Uptown Brown and his heavy friend, Mr. Thomas Bung, rise with a deliberation appropriate to their dignity and weight, and Mr. Brown says:

"Come on down if you like and we'll have a turn at the radio ourselves."

His heavy friend, Mr. Bung, says:

"Well, I don't mind if I do."

Mrs. Uptown Brown glances across at her husband with a look that means, "Now what are *you* up to?" But she says nothing. She's too happy about Flossie. Let him for once if he likes, she thinks — only don't let him think that she's deceived. But she can straighten that out afterwards, so she merely says, quite invitingly:

"Come along, then, and we'll start a new rubber," and makes a place beside her for Mr. Overflow. There he is to sit for the rest of his life.

II

So after Miss Flossie Fitzclippet Brown and Mr. Edwin Overflow had come back upstairs, engaged, from the mute vicinity of the radio, Mr. Uptown Brown and Mr. Thomas Bung, his heavy friend, went down to the dining-room.

MR. BROWN: It's over here in the corner. Sit down, Tommie, in one of these big chairs while I turn on this damn thing. Have a cigar?

MR. BUNG: Well, I don't mind. Had it long?

MR. BROWN: No, just got it. The children like it. Try one of these.

MR. BUNG: Thanks.

MR. BROWN: Now I don't know how you found it upstairs, Tommie. It certainly seemed to me pretty dry.

MR. BUNG: It certainly did!

(*They both chuckle. They know what's coming.*)

MR. BROWN: Well, what about a little Scotch, eh, Tommie, my boy? Wait till I turn on this machine, or, no, I'll get the Scotch first.

(*Mr. Uptown Brown takes a key out of his pocket and goes and opens up a little cupboard in the corner angle of the wall.*)

MR. BROWN: I always keep it locked up over here. No use ringing for the servants. Bess can hear the bell from up there, you know, and she might get a little fussed up – say when, Tommie——

MR. BUNG (*speaking in a low gurgling voice such as is produced from the larynx by Scotch and soda*): Oh, no, no sense in making a fuss over these things. I'm always the same way at home, too. That's damn good Scotch, Ed.

MR. BROWN: Yes, have some more. Or wait till I turn on this

durn radio, otherwise Bess might—— Here, I think this is the dial you twist——

THE RADIO: SQUA-ARK——

MR. BROWN: No, that's not it. I'll get it in a minute. Now this is a Scotch, Tommie, that I can guarantee——

. . . . .

(*And ten minutes later Mr. Edward Uptown Brown is still saying*): Now this Scotch, Tommie, is a Scotch, that you won't get a better Scotch – Scotch – Scotch.

And after a while – after a long while – with a sigh, Mr. Uptown Brown rises from his chair and he says:

"Well, Tommie, old horse, I'll guess we'll have to get back to the drawing-room, or Bess will be wondering where we are. Wait till I give this a whirl again."

(*He turns a dial.*)

THE RADIO: SQUA-ARK——

MR. BROWN (*turning it off instantly*): Come along, Tommie, or say, what about another?

MR. BUNG: Yes, certainly, I'll join you. A wonderful thing this radio, isn't it?

. . . . .

And so when they do get up to the drawing-room, it is quite late and the cards are just about over. Eddie Brown Junior is adding up the score and he says without moving his face from his cigarette:

"What did you get, Dad?"

"Oh, nothing much."

"Didn't get Yomsk in Siberia?"

"No, I don't think so, did we, Tommie?"

"I guess not. But what we got wasn't so bad, either."

"Was there much interference, Dad?"

Mr. Brown, drawn fatally on and still chuckling to his friend:

"Not a damn bit."

Ominous words. Mrs. Brown gives one look at her husband. There will be plenty of interference later. He will get all the radio activity he wants a little later on.

. . . . .

Meantime the guests leave. Ed. Brown, Jr., radio expert, has risen from his chair and says to his friend, a fellow expert:

"Come on, Harry. It's late enough now to be worth while. There won't be much interference now. We'll see if we can get Yomsk."

Ted Brown and his friend, the two radio experts, go down to

the dining-room. The house is quiet now. It is getting late.

Ted says:

"Now sit down here while I tune her up. I guess Dad's been monkeying with it. Funny he can't learn, isn't it? (*He begins twisting and turning the dials.*)

"What I want to do is to try to get Yomsk, Siberia. The other night I was nearly sure I had Yomsk. There's a sending station there now, but they're not catalogued and it's hard to tell. Ever try to get them?"

"No. Nearly got Teheran in Persia the other night. At least I think it was Teheran. I couldn't be sure. It would be in Persia, I suppose."

"Yes – now wait – I believe. I've got it."

THE RADIO: SQUA-ARK——

TED (*shutting it off*): Gosh, no – that's only President Coolidge. Let's try it this way.

THE RADIO: SQUA-ARK——

"Drat it, that's a sacred concert. I thought they all quit at eleven. I'm sure that's the number I used for Yomsk. Wait a minute."

Ted turns at the dials. He and his friend sit in front of the machine in deep absorption. Ten minutes later Ted is still saying:

"No, cuss it – that's only the Beethoven Sonata being played in the opera house in Chicago – try this."

AND THE RADIO SAYS: SQUA-ARK——

And Ted says:

"Darn it. That's only Madame Galli Curci singing in St. Louis. I'll just try once more for Yomsk and if we can't get it, we'll shut off for the night. There's no sense bothering with these things near by.

He tries once more.

AND THE RADIO SAYS: SQUA-ARK——

And then he quits.

But far away in Yomsk, amid the snow, a grimy Bolshevik in a grimy café is singing an imitation American coon song. That's what he wants to hear.

And as Ted reluctantly turns off the machine, he says:

"It's a great thing, the radio, isn't it?"

. . . . . .

So Ted's expert friend goes home, and Ted Brown himself goes to bed. The radio is silent and the house is still. The mystic currents move through the air, and Atlanta is whispering to Vancouver, and Helsingfors in Finland murmurs to the Heb-

rides. But not a sound of it comes to the darkened room. The house is still and the people are asleep and the radio machine is silent. Its programs and its announcements lie beside it on a little table, but from it there comes not a sound. The radio, hushed by the whispering currents, is asleep.

And the hours pass – till it is late, late – and then softly, oh, very softly, one of the dining-room windows pushes up – surely no one lifted it, it just moved up – and into the dark room there steps such a soft man, with a black cap on his head and he moves with a little spot of light in front of him that comes from such a soft little lamp that he holds in his hand, and in that half-light, you can see that he wears a dirty mask on a dirty face with two holes in it where his shadowed eyes are.

This man – do you guess it, perhaps? – is not a scientist come to fix the radio, but he is a burglar and he has come to unfix some of the property of Mr. Uptown Brown.

The burglar turns his light here and there about the room – and he turns it presently upon the radio. There is no surprise in his face when he looks at it. Oh, no. This man has already spent some time in Ossining, New York State, and he knows all about radio and how to work a radio magazine.

"Radio!" he murmurs.

Then he looks at the printed sheets that lie beside it with the announcements for the night. President Coolidge speaks in New York on the World Court. That must be over. The man sighs, with relief or otherwise. And then he looks – what is this that he sees? Madame Pallavicini is to sing at midnight in the cathedral in the City of Mexico – midnight, that would be now – and she is to sing – and as the man in the mask turns the spotlight on the print he sees that she is to sing the aria:

"Enter Thou Not Into Temptation."

The burglar stands in front of the radio and there is stillness in the house. The man murmurs the title to himself.

Far away Madame Pallavicini in the midnight cathedral in the City of Mexico is singing, and the mystic currents are murmuring around the house, "Enter thou not into temptation."

The burglar murmurs to himself, "Ah, shucks, I'll chance it," and puts his hand out towards the dials. Why? Well, perhaps he had taken music classes when he was at Ossining in New York State; perhaps he had an ear for music, or perhaps, if you like, some of the things they say in the story books about the burglar are true. Perhaps the sound of "*Enter thou not into Temptation,*" intoned in a cathedral at midnight, hits him harder than it does you or me.

At any rate, the man looked all about him, listened a moment, and then, with the hand of an expert, turned rapidly the dials of the radio. And with that, all the mystic waves of the night that had gathered in the great cathedral of the City of Mexico came rushing over the wires.

AND THE RADIO SAID: SQUA-ARK——

. . . . .

The sound of it rattled in the still house, the burglar heard a rattle at the lock of the front door and he knew what it meant. The Uptown Browns, like all sensible people of their class, pay part of the fee of a night watchman. As the night watchman entered the front door, the burglar, noiselessly as the mystic wave itself, moved out from the window. Madame Pallavicini and the whispering currents have done their work. He will not sin to-night.

## ✻ *One Crowded Quarter Second*

### HOW THEY MAKE LIFE MOVE IN THE MOVIES

IN REAL life, the process of turning tragedy into happiness, of alleviating a broken heart, of starting a new life, is the work of years and the slow effect of time. Even in a novel it can hardly be done under fifty pages. But in the movies they do it in exactly one quarter of a second.

The most beautiful thing about the movies is this rapid way in which, with a couple of flicks of the film, what looked like interminable sorrow destined to extend over years is changed into a "new life."

No matter what awful things may happen to the people in the movies, the spectator need never despair. The movie man can fix them up all right at any moment in one turn of the machine.

The hero, for example, gets sent to the penitentiary for ten years. You see him arrested, you watch the trial (four seconds), the fruitless appeal to the governor (two seconds), and then you see him put behind the kind of prison bars, the toast-rack pattern, that they use in the movie for the penitentiary.

A turnkey with a sad face and slow mournful steps (he takes

over five seconds) has locked the hero in. Great Heavens! ten years! to think that his young life – he is still only twenty-eight – is to waste away for ten years behind those stone walls; and then, just as you have hardly had time to finish thinking it – he's out!

And quite simple the way they do it! Just a legend or title, or whatever they call it, thrown on the screen:

AND SO THIS TRIED SOUL LEARNS IN SORROW A NEW PEACE

Yes, learns it and is out! Clear out of the penitentiary in a quarter of a second. Just by learning peace! I must say if I ever go in, I'll learn pretty quickly.

Yes, there he is out again, and, what is luckier still, not a day older: still only twenty-eight. And he's had time to shave in the quarter second while he was in there and looks pretty neat and handsome.

There he is in the same apartment and on the sofa beside him his wife – the very one that he sandbagged in a misunderstanding ten years ago is sitting and saying:

PERHAPS WE DIDN'T FULLY UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER, DESPARD

and after that they fade out into one another's faces and the screen remarks in conclusion:

NEXT WEEK GERALD FLOYD AND THE HOURCHI HOUTCHI GIRLS. DON'T MISS ONE OF THEM. THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF YORK BOARDING THE RENOWN——

and that is a sign that these broken lives are now mended.

In any case, the mending of a broken life is a very simple matter in the movies. It's a specialty that has been reduced to an art. If a movie character loses a husband or a wife, the loss is repaired in one-quarter of a second.

For example, here is a disconsolate movie widow – and how charming they look anyway; I'd like to buy a bag of them – you see her beside the grave, a saintly clergyman bending over to console her; the end of the long story of perhaps 4,000 feet of tragedy has come to this – this dull hopeless grief that finds no consolation.

No consolation! Just wait a minute and let that title writer get in his work. There you are:

AND SO THIS POOR SOUL FINDS IN LOVE A NEW BALM THAT HEALS THE WOUNDS OF THE PAST,

and you see her walking in a springtime garden (the season has changed in a quarter-second) and bending over her is a lover,

evidently a husband, – in fact, he must be, because there is a little wee child romping in the grass at their feet.

And the lover? Don't you see it? That means then that you never go to the movies. Why, the lover is the saintly clergyman, the one who was in the graveyard. He fell in love with her, time passed, they had this child – there you are. And all in a quarter of a second.

But perhaps still more wonderful are the complete changes of character, mostly very favourable, that are packed into the quarter-second. A bad man turns into a good one; a depraved villain into a gentle soul; a she-hyena into a chastened woman.

The other day, for example, in a moving picture I saw a villain – a real villain – he was rich and he ground down the poor, he terrorized a little town with the brute power of money. When that power failed, he hired bandits to murder people because they were too virtuous to help him.

Then fate intervened. A dam broke. The Colorado River rolled right over the villain and drowned him. Forty thousand cubic feet of water fell on him. Then they picked him out, plastered with mud six inches deep. That, apparently was a pretty serious situation.

But, no, the fatal quarter-second got in its work. The title maker speaks:

AND SO THIS HARD HEART AT LAST SOFTENS——

Presumably with the mud. At any rate, there he is, sitting on a sofa, NOT *drowned* – that was an error – with the heroine beside him and the mud all wiped off, and he is saying:

I SEE IT NOW. I HAVE BEEN A BAD MAN

Personally, I had seen it quite a little time before. But at any rate his redemption, I am certain, was complete and final because the next thing said in the picture was:

OTTAWA ONTARIO LORD WILLINGDON THE GOVERNOR GENERAL LOOKS ON AT SKIING CONTEST GATHERING THE RUBBER ON THE CONGO

Oh, yes, he's redeemed finally; the picture is over.

. . . . .

And I have wondered, too, whether something might not be done to apply this wonderful and happy system of transformations to some of the old masterpieces of the stage and literature. They are too sad. The tragedy is all right and very interesting, but it ought to be redeemed at the end by putting in a quarter-second of first-class movie work.

Take, for example, Hamlet. All the world knows how the

sorrow accumulates. Hamlet's father murdered, even before the play begins; his mother married to his uncle; Polonius stabbed; Ophelia drowned; Hamlet himself half crazy; his uncle killed; Yorick's skull mislaid; Laertes about to kill Hamlet – in short, a quite serious situation.

But that wonderful quarter-second of the movies would straighten it all out. Try this, for example:

YET EVEN HERE LOVE SNATCHES THIS WAYWARD SOUL FROM FATE——

And what do you see? Hamlet sitting beside Ophelia – she was not drowned, only got muddy and since has had time to wash – in the gardens of the Palace; and in another moment we find, smiling at them, his uncle, the King, no longer wicked; in fact, he says himself:

WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER, HAM,

and near them, playing on the grass, the inevitable child, only this time it is Hamlet's and Ophelia's. And you realize that the murder and the poisoning was only a DREAM of one of the characters, and that since then a quarter-second has passed and life has moved on and everything is all right. And

NEXT WEEK BUGGS AND JUGGS AN ALL-SCREEN COMEDY AUTHORIZED BY THE BOARD OF CENSORS OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC,

and that wipes out all vestige of Hamlet.

. . . . .

But after all, if we call them moving pictures, it's their business to move.

## ✻ *Done into Movies*

### BUT CAN YOU RECOGNIZE THE GOOD OLD STORIES WHEN THEY GET THEM DONE?

THE other day I went to see a moving picture of "Treasure Island," the late Robert Louis Stevenson's famous story. It was really an excellent thing, absolutely thrilling all the way through.

But in putting the story into the movies they had had to make a few necessary adaptations and alterations. It seems that the public demands this. Moving picture producers have often

explained to me that the public is very sensitive. There are subjects it doesn't like and topics which it prefers to avoid. And there are other things it insists on having in every first-class moving picture.

So I found that "Treasure Island" had had to be changed a little. In the first place the scene was not laid on an island. If you put a thing on an island that cuts out motor cars and limits the scope of the plot. So the scene was laid in California. And there was no treasure, because treasure has been worked to death. Instead of treasure the plot was shifted to holding up a bank, which is more up to date. That of course cut out the pirates and the ship, but put in bandits and a motor car. Incidentally, all the stuff about "Yo Ho! and a Bottle of Rum!" had to go. Any references of this sort antagonize a great number of spectators and have the appearance of criticizing the existing institutions of the United States – which is madness.

There were certain changes also in the persons of the story. John Silver instead of having one leg has two, so as to be able to hop in and out of a motor car. Jim Hawkins, the boy narrator of Stevenson's story, is changed into a girl. No moving picture is held to be complete unless a girl is brought into it. And Squire Trelawney, who is a middle-aged man in the written story, is made a young man. This allows for a proper ending by having the Squire marry Jim Hawkins.

Apart from these changes, the story is told with wonderful fidelity and accuracy. There is no doubt – indeed there could be no doubt – that the transformed story gains enormously from the few incidental alterations necessitated by the film.

Now this little incident has set me thinking over this process of adapting stories for the moving picture and admiring the way in which it was done. And so it chanced that just afterwards, by a fortunate coincidence, I got an opportunity of seeing something of the process itself. There happened to come into my hands the report made to one of the leading film companies by their expert writers on the prospects of adapting one or two well-known stories for moving picture presentation. I presume that it is no improper violation of confidence to present them here, especially as the stories mentioned are so familiar in their original forms as to be almost public property.

The first one is an expert report on the question of adapting the well-known story of Adam and Eve for the moving picture. It is as follows:

THE STORY OF ADAM AND EVE

*Technical Report on Its Adaptation for the Film*

"We have looked over this MS. with reference to the question of adapting it to a scenario. We find the two principal characters finely and boldly drawn and both well up to the standard of the moving picture. The man Adam – Christian name only given in the MS. – appeals to us very strongly as a primitive but lovable nature. Adam has "pep" and we think that we could give him an act among the animals, involving the very best class of menagerie and trapeze work which would go over big.

"But we consider that Adam himself would get over better if he represented a more educated type and we wish therefore to make Adam a college man, preferably from a western university.

"We think similarly that the principal female character, Eve, would appeal more directly to the public if it was made clear that she was an independent woman with an avocation of her own. We propose to make her a college teacher of the out-of-door woodland dances now so popular in the leading women's universities.

"It is better that Adam and Eve should not be married at the opening of the scenario but at the end after they have first found themselves and then found one another.

"We find the 'Garden' lonely and the lack of subordinate characters mystifying; we also find the multiplicity of animals difficult to explain without a special setting.

"We therefore propose to remove the scene to the Panama Canal Zone, where the animals are being recruited for a circus troupe. This will allow for mass scenes of Panaminos, Mesquito and other Indians, tourists, bootleggers and the United States navy, offering an environment of greater variety and more distinctive character than an empty garden.

"The snake we do not like. It is an animal difficult to train and lacking in docility. We propose instead to use a goat."

### Report No. II

*The story entitled "The Merchant of Venice"*

"The outline entitled 'The Merchant of Venice,' which comes to us with the signature, 'W. Shakespeare,' but with no further hint of the authorship, strikes us at once as a composition of great power. It is full of action. It has color and force, and the leading characters are strongly marked.

"We wish to recommend its immediate adaptation for the film, but at the same time to propose a few incidental changes necessary to make it a success.

"In the first place the character, Shylock, must not be a Jew

as this would needlessly antagonize a large section of the public. To avoid all offense it would be better to make him a Mexican.

"A further point to notice is that there are too many Italians in the piece and not enough Americans. It lacks patriotism. We would suggest that either the entire scene be removed to Venice, Illinois, or else that the principal characters such as Bassanio and Antonio be made American visitors to Venice and that for the Doge we substitute the consul general of the United States.

"We would like to replace Portia by one of our great criminal lawyers, leaving Portia as his stenographer.

"We think that the piece would gain in scenic quality by the introduction of a canal scene at night, by the drowning of one of the characters, perhaps several, in the Grand Canal at midnight and by the introduction of the Spanish Inquisition and the massacre of St. Bartholomew. These features would add historical interest, while the American character of the film could be stressed by the insert of a picture of the Supreme Court at Washington."

# SHORT CIRCUITS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## ✻ *Things I Hardly Dare Whisper*

MORE REVELATIONS OF ANOTHER UNKNOWN EUROPEAN DIPLOMAT. BY AN UNDISCLOSED AUTHOR OF EUROPEAN DISREPUTATION. TWO VOLUMES. TEN DOLLARS EACH, OR THE TWO FOR SEVEN-FIFTY.

As EVERYBODY knows, the recent craze for publishing diplomatic memoirs is exciting a storm of protest in the highest European circles. It is felt that it involves a dangerous leakage of political secrets. "We are leaking all over the place," writes Lord Bulkhead. "It has got to stop."

On the other hand, we cannot resist recommending to the reading public in the warmest terms the extraordinary and fascinating volumes announced above. It is no exaggeration to say that the publication of "Things I Hardly Dare Whisper" is calculated to arouse a whirlwind, the suction of which may carry down two or three of the principal governments of Europe.

The work is all the more intriguing in that the name of the author is buried in absolute secrecy. The publishers themselves are utterly unaware who wrote it. The authorship is variously attributed to Lord Balfour, ex-premier Poincaré, Lady Astor, Douglas Fairbanks, the Queen of Roumania, and Dorothy Gish. Miss Gish, however, on being approached, declared emphatically, "I didn't write it: so there!" Monsieur Poincaré says that he not only didn't write it, but he couldn't write it.

Perhaps the principal feature of the book is the extraordinary boldness of its revelation. Conversations between persons of the very highest rank and the most conspicuous position are reported with a frankness that verges on brutality.

Take, for instance, the passage, one of the most notable in the volumes, in which the unknown author relates a conversation with a Most Exalted Personage.

"We were sitting together in the bar of the House of Lords," he writes, "the Personage, as usual, sitting with his elbow on my shoulder and whispering into my ear so that Lord Snoop, the Master of the Buckhounds, and Lord Snipe, at that time in

office as Black Stick in Waiting – or Yellow Stick in Hiding, I forget which – could not overhear our conversation, which The Royal Personage obviously regarded as for us alone.

" 'What do you think of Sir Jaugh Bohn?' I asked. The Royal Personage looked carefully around and then whispered, 'He's a pup.' I made a silent note of this for publication.

" 'And what is Your Personage's opinion of the First Lord of the Admiralty?' His Personage advanced his face closer and took hold of my ear with his hand so as to draw it towards him. 'I consider the First Lord,' he whispered, 'as nothing better than a third-rate bum.'

"Realizing at once the high commercial value of these disclosures, I begged The Royal Personage to sit quiet a moment while I wrote them down."

. . . . .

A similar frankness and daring is shown not only in the treatment of royalty itself, but in the confidential pen pictures given by the author of the leading statesmen of Europe.

"We were sitting on a bench in the sun," he writes, "outside the modest little country home of Monsieur Clemenceau, whom I may designate the Old Tiger of France. The Old Tiger, who will be one hundred and six (if he lives long enough), had just spent a busy morning planting radishes. 'What is your opinion of England?' I asked of the Old Tiger. For a moment a flash of all his old impetuosity flashed out of the Old Tiger's eyes. 'It's a hell of a place,' he said."

But perhaps to most readers the most engrossing chapters of the book are those which deal with the origin, or what the author cleverly calls the genesis, of the Great War. Many memoirs have already dealt intimately with this topic. The Kaiser, General Ludendorf, Lord Grey, and others have essayed to analyze the causes of the conflict. The Kaiser says that it was a world attack directed against himself personally.

Lord Grey, while speaking in a very guarded and moderate way, thinks that the war may have had something to do with England and Germany and possibly with France.

The statement is also made in various quarters that the war represented the eternal conflict of the Zeitgeist with the Zeitschrift. Indeed, a colonel of one of the negro regiments from the United States has said this was exactly his idea in going into it. No doubt it was this idea of a Zeitgeist which inflamed the minds of many of the young men at the time.

In other quarters, and especially in academic circles, the opin-

ion is generally held that the war was a conflict of the Inevitable against the Inexhaustible.

It is all the more interesting to find that our present unknown author makes the astounding statement that he caused the war himself.

"It is strange to realize," he writes, "that a few casual words dropped by myself in a drawing room in Buda-Pest probably occasioned the entire conflagration." (It would not perhaps have been so strange if he had dropped them in a garage or somewhere where there was gasoline.)

"I was seated one evening talking with Prince Bughaus of Schlitz-im-Mein, himself of the immediate entourage of the Kaiser and intimate with every Chancellery in Europe. The Prince had been asking me confidentially what I thought Downing Street would do if the Quai d'Orsay lined up solidly with the Ball Platz and came down heavily on the Yildiz Kiosk. At that time (it was July of 1914), the whole atmosphere was tense with diplomatic electricity.

"Unfortunately, Prince Bughaus, who is a master of languages, was talking for greater secrecy in Chinese; and I misunderstood his reference to the Ball Platz and thought he was referring to the World's Base Ball Series. 'Everything is arranged,' I said, 'for the early autumn. And this time it will be a fight to a finish.' The Prince repeated quietly (in Chinese), 'A fight to a finish.' But that night he telegraphed to Berlin that Germany's only chance would be to anticipate her enemies by making war in August.

"The result of my casual remark is unfortunately only too well known."

. . . . .

One must not, however, suppose that these delightful volumes are entirely occupied with the tragic, the somber, or the pompous side of life. The author enlivens his pages with a number of delightful anecdotes in regard to the great people with whom he has been in contact, which are quite as amusing as those in any similar book of memoirs to-day. For example, the following delicious story is related in connection with the same Prince Bughaus of Schlitz-im-Mein just mentioned.

"Bughaus, as his friends call him, is not only one of the most astute men of his time in the diplomatic world, but is decidedly one of the wittiest. Indeed, I have never known any one with such an instantaneous command of repartee.

"I was sitting with Bughaus and several of the *corps diplomatique* one evening in one of the best-known and most fash-

ionable of the Buda-Pest Magyar restaurants, which perhaps I had better not name, inasmuch as naming it might give an idea which one I mean. The Prince summoned the head waiter to him and asked 'How much are your cold partridges?' 'I am sorry, your Transparency,' replied the man, 'we haven't any cold partridges.' 'In that case,' replied the witty Prince, 'we won't have any cold partridges.'

"I need hardly say that the entire *corps diplomatique* broke out into hearty laughter. In fact, they nearly choked themselves."

When we add that the two entire volumes are filled with material, grave and gay, on the same level as what we have already narrated, it will be understood that these volumes of confidential memoirs will challenge comparison with anything of the sort written in the last ten years.

## ✻ *Hands Across the Sea*

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN AMERICA HAS REMOVED ALL THE EUROPEAN ART

IT HAS been calculated that within the last twenty-five years over a billion dollars' worth of Art Treasures have been removed from Europe to America. The purchases include a great number of pictures by the old masters, – so great as to alarm the custodians of the Italian galleries, – statues of the highest antiquity and many manuscripts of the masterpieces of literature. Already the question of moving entire buildings, such as Shakespeare's cottage, etc., has been freely discussed.

It is clear that this movement once well started will know no limit save that of American wealth. And since American wealth has no limit, we shall some day find the journals of New York chronicling the completion of Art Removal something as follows:

FROM THE PRESS OF *1950*

The successful removal of Buckingham Palace to its new site in Mauch Chunk, Pa., where it will serve as the home of the Rotary Club may be said to mark the end of the Art Removal Movement. American connoisseurs say that there is now little or nothing left that they care to take. A certain disappointment

was expressed in Mauch Chunk art circles when it was found that the king was not included in the palace when brought over. But we have it on good authority that the club will make a further assessment on its members to buy the king if they want him.

It is of interest to look back over the successive phases of history which have thus reached their final culmination.

The removal of valuables from Europe to America seems to have originated with the purchase of pictures and works of art from the European Galleries. It was felt that America ought to have in its possession samples of the work of the great masters. No adverse comment was raised when a considerable number of paintings by Rubens, Titian, Velasquez and other masters were brought over to America. In the same way the original manuscripts of many great authors, Milton, Byron, Dickens, etc., were soon largely in American keeping. At the time it did not occur to the connoisseurs to buy the author himself.

It was soon found that other souvenirs of the past could be lifted and carried over to America as easily as paintings and manuscripts. We learn from old newspapers that it was about 1930 that removal of gravestones and monuments first began. An interesting item on this head may be here reproduced from what seems to have been a leading Texas newspaper in 1935.

"Our enterprising fellow-citizen, Mr. Phineas Q. Cactus, has succeeded in going all the art connoisseurs one better in the unique present which he has just made to this city. Mr. Cactus recently made a visit to the old country and was immensely impressed with some of the scenery which he considers little inferior to that of Texas. While inspecting the grazing lands of Lincolnshire he noticed particularly the little country churchyard, crowded with a jumble of graves and leaning tombstones, with great elms rising among them, and celebrated to all lovers of American poetry as the site of Gray's famous 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard.' Mr. Cactus has been enabled to buy the entire spot and is having it moved, trees and all, to Texas. In their new setting the graves, however, will be neatly laid out on a rectangular plan, the plots divided with little streets and avenues, properly numbered and the bygone tenants arranged alphabetically. It is felt that this noble gift will do much to stimulate interest in the study of the history of Texas."

. . . . .

It appears probable that this unrivaled feat – successfully accomplished – gave the impetus to removal of land sites on a still more generous scale. The removal of the Battle of Hastings

which was re-laid out beside West Chicago in 1940 was followed by the careful and methodical transfer of a selected number of battlefields from Europe to America. The Battle of Waterloo, for which the bidding was very keen, was finally purchased by the Ladies' Country and Golf Club of Fargo, Dakota.

It seems to have been at this point that the first murmurs of disapprobation, if not of protest, were heard from the other side. The following letter, couched in a language perhaps a trifle too warm for the occasion, seems to have appeared in the London *Spectator*, at some time in the year 1945.

Editor, *The Spectator*,
DEAR SIR:

On returning from a residence of several years in the East and paying a visit to the continent of Europe I noticed, sir, with a certain shock of surprise, sir, that the battle of Waterloo had been removed from its place. Without wishing, sir, to question the perfect legal right of the purchaser, sir, I cannot but express a feeling of regret. And when I add that I have looked all over for Blenheim, Jena, Austerlitz and other battles and cannot find them you will admit, sir, that the situation is one to which the attention of your paper ought to be called.

Yours, etc.,
TOBASCO PEPPER,
(Retired) Major. Indian Army.

. . . . .

Such excitement as may have been occasioned, however, by the removal of the battlefields was soon forgotten in the mingled wonder and congratulation which followed the transfer of the European landscape on a still larger scale. It was little thought that when the United States federal government accepted the ownership of the forest of Fontainebleau in return for the cancellation of the French debt that they meant to move it to America. The transfer, though vast in its totality, was simplicity itself in detail. Nothing was needed but to dig up the trees and replant them on this side of the water. As it costs only three dollars on the average to remove a tree and as it used to cost an American citizen about five dollars a tree to go over and look at it, the transaction is hugely profitable. The beautiful forest as replanted on the Hudson now reaches from Yonkers to South Troy, containing a gasoline station at every quarter mile.

. . . . .

It appears, however, that the proposal which has just been made in the legislature of Montana is destined, if carried out,

to eclipse anything already accomplished. It has long been felt that there is an insufficient amount of scenic art among the Rocky Mountains. The tourist in that district finds himself with nothing to look at. It is proposed, therefore, to establish a special city – the site of which will be the famous Dead Dog's Gulch – entirely composed of European churches of historic interest. The state has already options on several of these buildings now in America and will buy such few as are left in Europe. When the plan is completed the new city of Ecclesia, Mont., laid out in squares, will contain in one and the same municipality, the Church of Notre Dame, the Madeleine, the Mosque of St. Sofia, York Minster, the Vatican and numerous other interesting specimens. It is further proposed that the legislature shall, by a series of criminal statutes, create a religious atmosphere suitable to the city.

. . . . .

Vast as have been the operations thus undertaken in Art Removal it is as interesting as it is reassuring to realize that they have involved no loss of money. Indeed, a calculation just made by Professor Yidd of Columbia shows that there has been a considerable profit. Before the era of Art Removal about 333,000 Americans visited Europe every year and spent, on the average, about three thousand dollars each. This made a total of a billion dollars and represented the interest on $25,000,000,000. As there is now no reason to go to Europe, all the money, perhaps twice the amount spent on removing pictures, trees and churches, has been saved.

Nor is that the whole of the case. At present it is found that an increasing number of Europeans come over to America to see the former treasures of Europe. It was noted that on a single steamer last week there was a party of young Englishmen coming over to have a look at Westminster Abbey and a group of enthusiastic Scots anxious to see Edinburgh Castle.

The good work may be carried still further. They say there are some things worth taking in South America.

# ✻ *If They Go on Swimming*

## A FORECAST OF THE END OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL CRAZE

HAVE you ever paused to think, my dear reader – or do you ever think? – of what will happen if the present swimming mania keeps up?

Only a little while ago it was looked upon as an impossible feat to swim through the Niagara Gorge. Then somebody swam it. Then somebody else swam it. And then everybody swam it – and the Niagara Gorge has become, more or less, a sort of bathing resort.

The next feat was the passage of the English Channel. It was called impossible. Then somebody swam it. Somebody else swam it. Everybody swam it. And look at it now – black with people.

After that came Catalina. It was declared an absolutely impossible swim. Somebody (already a forgotten hero) swam it. Then somebody else. Then more. And now parties swim across in dozens.

So let us look ahead, by imagining the press notices of the next few months and years and see where this swimming business is leading to. Here we have, for example, the beginning of the famous Bering Sea Contest of the summer of 1929. Thus:

### WILL ATTEMPT BERING STRAIT

NOME, Alaska, June 1, 1929. – A daring, and perhaps a suicidal proposal is put forward by John Eiderduck, an Eskimo of upper Alaska, who will attempt to swim from America to Asia. The proposition is generally regarded here as little short of madness.

The distance along the line which Eiderduck has selected is a hundred miles, the entire course being broken by currents and tides of extraordinary ferocity. The course is also thickly strewn with floating ice and is exposed to the full fury of the sub-arctic gales.

Eiderduck, however, is a man of extraordinary physical strength and endurance, habituated to the water since his infancy. He proposes to smear himself a foot deep with seal blubber and to close up his eyes with ham fat.

Sea captains and others who know the straits well declare that Eiderduck cannot possibly swim it.

. . . . .

NOME, June 5, 1929. – John Eiderduck, covered with seal blubber and his eyes closed with ham fat, successfully accomplished today the feat of swimming from America to Asia. The swim occupied four days, one hour, and one minute. During the last fifty miles, Eiderduck was in a state of coma, and during the final ten miles he was practically dead, swimming in a purely mechanical way about ten feet under water.

Eiderduck landed at Chuk-Chuk in Northeastern Siberia, and had to be harpooned to lift him out of the water.

### BERING SWIM REPEATED

NOME, June 10, 1929. – Peter Williams, a college student of the Aurora Borealis Agricultural College, Point Barrow, has duplicated, if not surpassed, the record swim of John Eiderduck. Leaving the American Coast on Monday evening, he landed in Siberia late on Wednesday afternoon, having swum the entire distance in a little less than three days. Peter reports a cold trip.

### GIRL SWIMMER BREAKS BERING SEA RECORD

NOME, June 20, 1929. – Miss Ettie Underweight, a girl teacher in the Nome High School, swam from America to Asia, in two days and a half. Miss Underweight, who weighs only 95 pounds (troy weight), was accompanied by a boat from which she was given chocolates, cigarettes, candies, cigars, and chewing gum during her swim.

### OCTOGENARIAN LADY MAKES INTERCONTINENTAL RECORD

NOME, Aug. 1, 1929. – Among the many persons who have swum from continent to continent during the past few weeks, the palm of victory is now universally awarded to Mrs. Martha McFooze, a Scottish lady who has been living as a missionary in Kamskatka, Asia, for over fifty years. Mrs. McFooze is eighty-four years of age and learned to swim only last summer. She made a remarkably good passage, leaving the Asia coast early on Wednesday and arriving in America late on Tuesday, thus making the trip in about one hour less than nothing, according to the standard time of both places.

Now that the Bering currents and the conditions of the swim are thoroughly understood, the transit is being made by hundreds of people every week.

. . . . .

But with the advent of the year 1930, a new excitement will break out:

WILL SWIM TO HAWAII

San Francisco, June 1, 1930. – Intense excitement is raging in San Francisco over the announcement that a local multimillionaire and enthusiast has offered a prize of twenty dollars for the first person who will swim from San Francisco to Hawaii. The feat is here regarded by all those who know the course as practically impossible, the distance of 2,095 miles being filled with currents running in all directions and infested with sharks, etc., etc., etc., etc. . . .

. . . . . .

San Francisco, July 10, 1930. – Miss Lottie Lotsofit, a high-school girl of this city, has successfully completed the swim to Hawaii. The swim occupied exactly twenty days, Lottie keeping up an average speed of four miles an hour.

On her return here, a civic reception will be tendered to her and the prize of twenty dollars will be presented to her by the mayor.

. . . . . .

And then after that, in the years from 1930 onward, the papers will be crowded with little swimming items from all over the world, thus:

SWIMMING IN ALL DIRECTIONS

Nagasaki, June 1, 1931. – The Reverend Josephus and Mrs. Hussel swam in to-day from the Philippines. They report a quiet passage.

. . . . . .

Valparaiso, Chile, June 1, 1932. – Two high school girls from the Tacoma (Wash.) Academy swam in here by mistake. They were heading for London via Panama, but missed the entry to the canal in a mist. They report things quiet on the west coast of South America, but passed a school of school teachers swimming from Callao to Vancouver.

. . . . . .

Hamburg, June 15, 1933 – Hans Hamfat of Hamburg completed to-day the first ocean swim attempted as a freight carrier. Hamfat, who weighs three hundred and fifty pounds, carried nearly half a ton of mixed cargo across from Norway at a rate that cut far below the ordinary freight charges. It is proposed to incorporate him and let him swim back and forward to America.

. . . . . .

In other words, by that time this hurried and hustling world will have overdone and done to death the swimming business, as it does everything else. It will go the way of the 1897 bicycle and the 1912 tango and all the other hobbies of a restless generation.

Why can't we take things a little quietly?

## ✻ *If Mussolini Comes*

### WHAT WE WOULD BE ENTITLED TO CONCLUDE WOULD OCCUR

The glad news has gone abroad – or is it just a rumor? – that Signor Mussolini will shortly visit America.

"In a few months," the great Italian patriot is reported as having said to the press, "I shall go out to America. As soon as I have completed the fascistification of Europe, I shall make the voyage. There are just a few more things here which I want to abolish and then I shall be ready to go over to America and see what needs abolishing over there." After which Signor Mussolini threw the interviewer out of the window and turned eagerly to his desk.

There is no doubt that everybody has been immensely struck with the rise and growth of the Fascisti movement in Italy. They didn't know at first what it was, but it pointed clearly to the fascistification of all Europe.

When Signor Mussolini stepped out from the ranks of the nation, everybody saw that he was a real man; and when he abolished the Italian Parliament and threatened to abolish the church and the labor unions and the king and the Socialists, and to sweep away the national debt, the taxes, together with the upper, lower, and middle classes, everybody realized that he had started something.

Add to this that the Fascist never shaves, that he doesn't believe in democracy, that he won't stand for any back-talk anybody and it is clear that the new doctrines will make a tremendous hit on this side of the water. Anybody who has to deal with taxi-cab drivers, hotel clerks, customs officials, and traffic cops, knows that we have our own Fascisti all around us already.

I can therefore imagine that if Signor Mussolini really does come and make a tour of this continent, there will break out a chorus of enthusiasm on the following model:

MUSSOLINI LANDS IN NEW YORK

NEW YORK, Monday. – Signor Mussolini, the dictator of Italy, landed here this morning after having heaved the immigration officials into the outer harbor. Mussolini's refusal to allow any of his baggage to be opened has delighted all the customs officials, while the fact that he openly carried a gallon of Chianti under his arm has at once won him the esteem of the Federal prohibition inspectors.

Mussolini expressed himself as delighted with New York. It needs nothing, he said, except to be knocked down and built over again. "Move it ten miles up the Hudson," he exclaimed, "further from Philadelphia and nearer to Sing Sing, and it could be made a great city."

Mussolini spoke briefly and modestly of American institutions, expressing the greatest admiration for everything about them, except such things as the constitution, liberty, equality, and democracy. "These, however," he says, "are already passing and with an earnest patriotic effort can soon be got rid of altogether." The local press is filled with eulogistic comments on Signor Mussolini. His refusal to pay his hotel bill was met with wide endorsement.

The illustrious Italian will leave at once for Washington, where he will inspect the government.

MUSSOLINI VISITS WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON, Tuesday. – Signor Mussolini, the distinguished dictator of Italy and founder of the Fascisti movement, arrived in Washington at 10 o'clock this morning. He at once recommended the purification of the government by the abolition of both houses of Congress. The distinguished statesman was closeted with the President all afternoon in an earnest consideration of the abolition of the presidency. Meantime Signor Mussolini advocates that the Chief Justice and the other members of the Supreme Court be brought to trial at once, either for *læsa majestas* or under the Volstead Act (he doesn't care which), and either executed or banished to Murray Bay.

Signor Mussolini considers that government in this country is lacking in emotional appeal. He recommends that as an inauguration of the new method of heroic government, every Monday be declared a day of National Rejoicing, followed by

Tuesday as a day of National Weeping, with Wednesday as Patriotic Feast Day, and Thursday as a Grand General Clambake and Strawberry Festival.

He says that what our government needs is pep. Signor Mussolini, it is reported, will shortly visit the Middle West, traveling incognito as the Duke of Oklahoma with a view to introducing the aristocratic principle.

### MUSSOLINI VISITS OTTAWA

OTTAWA, Wednesday. – Signor Mussolini yesterday paid a flying visit to Ottawa with a view to seeing how much of the government would need to be abolished at once and how much of it might be left over till next year. He expressed his regret that the Prime Minister is not wearing a black shirt and offered to lend him his other one. It is said that Mussolini will very likely advocate the entire abolition of the Prairie Provinces.

### MUSSOLINI REFORMS BASEBALL

CHICAGO, Thursday. – Signor Mussolini, during his visit to Chicago, witnessed a baseball game for the first time. The great Italian patriot expressed himself as delighted with the contest which he declares to be the nearest thing to the true Fascisti idea that he has seen in America.

He admired especially the rigidity and stringency of the rules, but questions whether there are enough of them. At present, he says, it would be possible to know all the rules, whereas in Italy the rules of any public game are kept secret. He was surprised to find that the umpire has no power of life and death over the players.

Signor Mussolini leaves at once in order to fill a lecture engagement at Harvard.

### MUSSOLINI LECTURES AT HARVARD

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., Friday. – Intense interest and enthusiasm are being shown for the lectures by Signor Mussolini given here at the invitation of Harvard University on the doctrine of force as a social factor. His statement that the public are just a pack of hogs has been received by the public with delight.

The business men whom Mussolini denounces as a set of crooks are flocking to hear him, while the society people are entranced with his theorem that society people have no brains. The clergy also are very much interested in his dictum that every clergyman is more or less a nut.

Meantime invitations to lecture are pouring in from all over

the country. The public statement of the illustrious Italian that the Middle West is sunk in ignorance as deep as mud has led to enthusiastic calls to the Middle West. His grand slam on California has been made the occasion of an invitation to Leland Stanford University. His theory that the moving pictures are doing the work of the devil has prompted the offer of a contract from Hollywood, while his plain challenge, "To hell with radio," is to be broadcast all over New York.

### DEPARTURE OF MUSSOLINI

*The Reverse Side of the Picture*

The general wave of awakening in this country which has accompanied the progress of enthusiasm for the Fascisti movement is somewhat averted by the severe business depression which has overwhelmed the soap industry. Soap is said to be unsalable, and all colored shirts are being exported to Ethiopia, while the barber shops are closing for lack of business.

These, however, are felt to be only the back eddies in the current of a great national movement.

Meantime, Mussolini having finished his gallon of Chianti, to his regret, is departing for Italy tomorrow.

## ✻ *This World Championship Stuff*

### AND WHY I AM OUT OF IT

Now that the World's Baseball Series is again approaching and the World's Prize Fight is over, the World's Tennis Championship decided and the World Medal for Needlework awarded, it is the right moment for some one to call attention to the alarming growth of this World Stuff.

We are reaching a situation where nobody is satisfied with any form of achievement or competition or contest unless it takes in the whole world. In olden days, a man could make a reputation and feel a tremendous pride in himself even in a very restricted area.

I knew a man who lived and died respected because he had taken a prize as the second best checker-player in York County, Ontario.

I knew another man who was famous as the champion long distance jumper of Bellows Falls, Vt. But what would that man have thought if he could have read of a Million-Dollar World's Jump jumped at Constantinople, by jumpers from the entire jumping world.

This world competition stuff takes all the joy out of the lesser and humbler things. I will give a very simple and personal example. A year or so ago I was getting quite stout, comfortably stout, and I was proud of it. But all my pleasure in the fact was ruined by a newspaper paragraph that read:

"WORLD'S CHAMPION STOUT BOY IN IOWA

"The State of Iowa has produced in Edward Aspiration Smith of Cedar Falls, Iowa, the World's Champion stout boy. Ed, who was born and raised in this state, is only fifteen years old and weighs 420 pounds. He attended high school here for three years and weighed one hundred pounds more with each class he attended. This fall he was persuaded to enter the Fatness Contest organized at the fall fair at Indian's Gulch, Iowa, open to all the world. Ed speaks very modestly of his success, which he attributes as much to his parents as to himself."

After I read that I realized that there was no use in any efforts of mine. This infernal boy would beat me out any time. He can add ten pounds to my one easily. I don't seem even to care about trying to be the stoutest man on my street with Ed Smith on the horizon.

All that I can do now is to content myself with reading of the increasing world triumph of Edward Aspiration Smith, of the medal he will win at the Pan-American Stoutness Contest at Washington, D.C.; of how the President will say to him, "Well, Ed, you certainly are stout"; and then he will go over to London and defeat all comers in the World's Weigh-In and King George will say to him, "Well, Ed, you certainly are fat!"; and after that he will appear in Paris at the Concurrence Mondiale de la Grosseur and Monsieur Poincaré will say to him, "Eh bien, monsieur Ed, vous êtes certainement gros."

And in the whole of Edward Aspiration Smith's career the only part I can take will be to bet on him in each successive contest that he carries on. That is exactly where we are getting to, those of us who are not world people ourselves – the excluded two billion who don't weigh 420 pounds, and can't jump eight feet in the air, who can't sing to 10,000 people, or pound anybody to a pulp in the presence of 120,000 others. We just bet. That's us and that's all that we amount to.

To-day, for example, there is a World's Horse running in a World Race in Cuba. I'm betting on that. And there's a World Man swimming the Irish Channel – or, no, he's drowned; but, anyway, there's some man swimming some channel somewhere – a World Channel – he's doing it for a World Belt or something. Anyway, I am betting on him. Why wouldn't I? Personally, I couldn't swim across the Lachine Canal. So all I can do is bet. You too.

There's a slight consolation in the fact that these world people come to a natural end. Some one else out-worlds them. I know perfectly well that sooner or later Edward Aspiration Smith will run up against something a little stouter than himself. At the Pan-Continental World's Entire Globe Million-Dollar Contest, Ed will be beaten out by a Chinese boy from Shantung, who can't read or write, but weighs half a pound more than Ed. And that half pound will hurl Edward clean down to the bottom again, and people will look on him as quite thin and his book "How I Became Fat" will lose its sale entirely. Such is the poison of the World Stuff.

So it is coming about that we are getting to have a group of World People superior to the rest of ourselves. We sit and look on. The other day in a New York restaurant, they pointed out to me the World's Most Highly Paid Plumber eating supper with the World's Champion Baggage-Smasher, and there was a World's Prize Lady Mannequin eating with them. Could I have had her with me? No. I was outclassed.

If this thing goes much further, I propose to start a society of World Assassinators and send them out. If I do, I warn such people as Mr. Charlie Chaplin and Mr. Fairbanks and Mr. Tunney and the Lady Mannequin, who got the World's Beauty Prize, to look out. But, pshaw, what would be the use? Before my society was a month old, it would hold a competition and some one in it would take the World Prize for Assassination, and I would have to bet on him.

But I'd like at least to warn the public that some of the consequences of the world stuff are going to be as serious as they are unforeseen. Take the case of War – a thing in itself quite as unimportant to the world as Prize Fights or Tennis or Beauty Contests. We are in danger of losing it. Not so very long ago everybody was content, amply content, with a quiet little war between one or two nations, just doing the best they could without any outsiders.

Any one of us would, for example, have been satisfied with a select little war between the United States and England, fought

out between ourselves with no interference. We might perhaps have allowed the French to look on or even to take a small part because they are old friends. But beyond that we never had any aspirations at all.

But look at the present situation. We are all so spoilt with the idea of a World War that we won't be content with anything less. I talked the other day with an officer of very high rank in the American Army who expressed to me exactly what is felt in his profession about the outlook.

"You can't blame us," he said, "if we are discouraged. The prospect of war, that is, of a real war, a World War, seems most unpromising. Several times lately we could, of course, have had a war with Mexico. But our fellows say they simply wouldn't fall for it. It's not worth while. War with Japan used to sound inviting a few years ago. But after all, there are only about seventy million of them and one hundred and ten million of us, or one hundred and eighty million all together – bush league stuff!

"As for a World War," he continued, "you just can't get them to come in or at least to agree when it is to be. Some nations would like it to be before Christmas, and others want to wait till after New Year's when the public are less preoccupied. The result is going to be that, first thing we know, we won't get any war at all."

. . . . .

There: That's the situation as I see it, and the danger that prompts me to write this essay. After which, the only thing to do is to hand the manuscript to a World Organization to give it a World Printer.

## ✻ *Get Off the Earth*

### NOW THAT THIS GLOBE IS USED UP, LET'S LOOK FOR ANOTHER

I WAS having a talk the other day with McGinnis, the famous Frenchman who has just flown from Norway to Nigeria. I think it was he. Anyway, it was either McGinnis or else Raoul de la Robinette, the great American aviator, or the Italian, Schwarz. One mixes these flyers.

The point is that the flyer was complaining that, in the shape in which things are now, there is nowhere left to fly to. "Where can we go?" he asked. "You remember that last summer when Lindbergh and then Chamberlin and then Byrd and the others flew across the Atlantic Ocean, it created quite a stir. But how long did it last? Within a few months the newspapers carried headings such as "*Chicago Girl Flies to France*," "*Octogenarian Hops Atlantic*" – that sort of thing.

"Presently it didn't even amount to that. Here's a paragraph, for example," continued the aviator, "cut out of yesterday's paper, that reads: 'Concert Postponed. Madame Hoopitup, the Great Dutch Soprano, who was to have appeared in New York, will be unable to appear to-night owing to a severe cold. It is thought that she may have contracted this in her transatlantic jump. Her medical man, who flew at once from Ohdam to her assistance, has sent for her daughter, who is now flying to Rio to join her brother who will fly with her to her mother.'

"So you see there is nowhere to fly to. After the Atlantic, we soon used up the rest. Somebody flew across to Japan, but the Japanese got back at us at once. Then it was announced that the great Polish aviator, William Henry O'Heir, would fly from Warsaw to the desert of Gobi. And he had everything ready when just then a Mongolian flyer from Gobi landed in Warsaw.

"We've tried the poles and that's nothing. There's a restaurant now at each of them. In fact, there are no queer places left in the world any more. All the odd spots are gone. The Negus of Abyssinia is advertising for American bartenders. The Grand Llama of Tibet gave an interview on Mother's Day on the dangers of cigarette-smoking. The Khan of Tartary has put in a golf course, and the Rajah of Sarawak is playing chess by radio with the Begum of Bhopal.

"What's the good of flying? There's nowhere to fly to."

. . . . .

He ceased and left me. And hardly had he gone when I fell into the company of another distressed acquaintance whose principal interest in life till only recently has been radio and all that goes with it.

"I'm done with it," he said. "There's nowhere to talk to. Only a few years ago, it gave us a great thrill when New York actually talked to Chicago. Then we lengthened it out to San Francisco and Vancouver. Then there came a time – how childish it seems now – when people actually got excited because New York talked to London.

"It's queer that no one foresaw what was bound to happen.

The earth is only 25,000 miles round at the roundest. And it's less if you just run round the top half of it. You can't get more than 12,500 miles away from anybody if you try.

"When New York called up Rumbumabad in the Punjab, they were halfway round the world. And when London called up Dunedin, New Zealand, and Hammerfest, Nroway, spoke to Tierra del Fuego, Patagonia, the thing was over.

"There's nowhere to talk to now. The only reason to talk now would be to hear what they say and think. And that's nothing. They say and think just what we do. Nobody now is far enough away. Unless," he concluded wistfully, "we can get off the earth!"

. . . . .

And a little later I met a third. "Business?" he said, "rotten. There's nobody to sell to. I've just been through equatorial Africa selling cars – selling our new closed car with self-regulating refrigeration and a lion-catcher in front. But it's no good. They've all got them. All the highways from Tanganyika to Lake Tchad are crowded with them. There's no use inventing any more new devices. They just go all over the world in a day.

"And to think that when first I saw equatorial Africa thirty years ago, those people would buy glass beads and trade a chunk of ivory six feet long for a broken soda water bottle.

"But it's no use. Nowadays everybody knows everything and everybody has everything, and you can't sell anything. The only way to sell things now would be to get clear off the earth itself. There must be some new boobs somewhere."

. . . . .

And so, too, the next one. "Travel," he said. "Why should I? There's nowhere to travel to. Every place has become just like every other place. Wherever you go you see big signs up with the words GARAGE and GASOLINE. The Chinese wear English golf suits, and the English wear Chinese pyjamas. There are no local manners and customs left. All the world eats French omelettes, chop suey, finnan haddie, and Chicago ham. Even the dervishes now have a room and a bath,, and the Hottentots use safety razors. Travel is ended."

And so it happened that just after I had listened to these different complaints, I read in the paper that paragraph that everybody saw the other day about the possibility of getting to the moon. It seems that Professor What's-his-name – the great physicist of that big university – says that with modern explosives a huge cannon could easily fire people clear beyond the

earth's attraction and land them on the moon like mashie shots on a golf green.

That's the thing for us. We've spoilt this poor old globe. We've got it all so explored and surveyed and exploited, so organized and so uniform, so entirely subdued to our use that the whole place is tame and wearisome. There are no rough spots left.

But think of the moon. With hardly enough atmosphere to breathe in, with great pits and caverns ten miles deep, with internal fires and external darkness, and with life primitive and hideous in the sunken crevasses.

What a place! What a romance, what a chance for inventions, and what a market.

Let us hop off for it, one by one. Go ahead, Colonel Lindbergh, you're first.

Of course, we don't come back. But who cares?

# BYGONE CURRENTS

## ✻ *The Lost World of Yesterday*

### A PEN PICTURE OF THE VANISHED PAST – THE HORSE AND BUGGY

You might see it in "Anno Domini 1880," skimming along any country road, it or them, the Horse and Buggy. A fairy vehicle, it seemed, light and swift, so that the buckboard and the lumber wagon seemed at once hopelessly clumsy, slow, and inconvenient. It was the last word in ease.

It had a step to step in by, so that there was no need to throw oneself over the side, as in the lumber wagon. It had springs between the body – the chassis – and the axle, so that when the wheels hit a stone or bumped into a rut the light chassis oscillated in the air like a canary's nest on a willow bough.

With the buckboard, each jolt was a collision, head-on and uncompromising; the lumber wagon had about as much give and take as a war chariot; the buggy danced upon its springs like a daffodil.

In front was a dashboard sheltering from the splash of mud, and folded into it, by a miracle of inventive ingenuity, a waterproof rug or cover for the knees. Behind the seat, by another stroke of invention, was a sort of locker or receptacle that would hold two quart bottles.

But the real point of the horse and buggy was their speed. Goodbye to the heavy lumber wagon left behind in the dusty road as we spin past on the green grass that edges the track; goodbye to the buckboard, once the dashing marvel of the corduroy road; goodbye to the hayrack and the horse-threshing-machine, and the other vehicles of the country highway. The buggy passes them as if they are standing still.

The horse and buggy had no speed indicator. But they could hit up seven miles an hour with ease, and make it ten if the horse ran away. There was no speed limit in terms of miles; the law forbade reckless driving, but seven miles an hour was all right anywhere, except only inside a village, or an incorporated town, or a municipality, or beside a church, where it fell to two, and up-hill, where it sank to one.

The horse and buggy used no gasoline. With them, there was

no painful nuisance of filling the tank or cranking up. It wasn't necessary. Just get the lantern and go out to the stable and slip the harness on the horse, bring him round to the trough and break the ice if it was winter, or if it was summer just pump a little till the pump started and fill up the trough, and then put the horse into the buggy and bring them round to the back door, and that was all.

A smart man could hitch in fifteen minutes. Even a child could do it all except the tail-strap.

When the horse and buggy skimmed along in 1880 in the hey-day of their popularity, there was in the buggy, typically, a lady and gentleman – I beg pardon, I am forgetting how to use my own original language – there was in it a "young feller and a girl." He was taking her "out for a spin." In 1880, to "spin" a girl was the sure way to win her.

The young feller wore his store clothes, gingerbread brown, and a black hat copied from the North American pirates, and the girl had on a colored dress copied from the Algonquins. They didn't take their fashions from France in 1880. They got them right here.

The spin in the horse and buggy as compared with the modern motor car – also called the automobile or the horseless carriage – was safety itself. The horse might dash into a snake fence and hurl the girl over it on to a pile of stones in the fence corner; but without damage – you couldn't hurt those girls in 1880.

The horse might, of course, get a puncture by picking up a stone, but all you had to do was to speak softly to it, lift its leg, and kick it in the stomach. In a few minutes you were off again.

The young feller and the girl in the horse and buggy were making love. They didn't know it, but they were. They thought that they were just out for a spin looking at the crops.

"Them oats," he said, "of Bob Ames's's ain't headin' out the way they should."

"No, indeed," she answered, "they didn't ought to be so green still."

Both of them had been to school – in the red schoolhouse on the road itself; both of them could "speak grammar" if they tried to; but that would be affected. And when he said, "I ain't seen no crops on the whole equally superior to them there," the language had a home feeling about it that you don't get in a spelling book.

Some of these young fellers of 1880 afterwards sat in legislatures, or preached from city pulpits, and became the nation

builders of this continent. But when they gave up saying "this here" and "them there," they had taken on something alien to their true selves – but did they ever really give it up? I doubt it. In the most plutocratic homes of the continent, when the English butler's back is turned, your host may still say to you, "Try one of these here cigars." And if you come from where he does, you will answer, "Yes, sir, they're a good cigar, them."

. . . . .

But I forgot the horse and buggy – they're off and gone a quarter mile down the road; they're passing through Riddel's Bush on the hillside, and the swinging boughs and the green leaves nod over their heads. Not making love? I am not so sure of it. Look – the young feller has handed to the girl a "conversation lozenge," a white, flat piece of peppermint candy with a motto on it in red poison: *"If you love me as I love you no knife can cut our love in two."*

When that lozenge was passed from hand to hand in 1880, it was as full of meaning as when Morgan the Buccaneer handed a chip to his associate pirate, or the Turkish Sultan a bowstring to his Vizier. It spelt *fate*. And if the girl took it and ate it – I mean, "took and eat it" (I keep slipping up on this language) – then her fate was settled.

At the end of the vista of green trees, she could see already in her fancy the meeting-house and the minister and the stern paraphernalia of marriage as it was in 1880.

The horse and buggy have done their work. Turn them head home in the evening twilight.

## ✻ *Come Back to School*

### AND LET US SEE WHAT THE DEAR OLD DAYS FELT LIKE

A NUMBER of excellent people, as they pass from youth to middle age, begin to look back with regret to their days at school. The idea grows in their minds that their school days were the happiest period in their lives.

Many a prosperous business man pauses in the intervals of his lunch at the club, or stands a moment pensive on his golf course,

to recall with wistful longing the days when he was a boy at school. "Yes," sir," he says to himself or to his neighbour, "I didn't know it at the time, but those certainly were happy days." And his neighbour, between the puffs of a Havana cigar, agrees with him.

So let us see what it was really like.

Come back with me for one morning in school.

You, my good friend, prosperous business man and happy head of a household, you will be good enough to transport yourself in fancy back to your school days. Come along to school with me and let us see how you like it.

And by the way, hurry up! School begins at 9 A.M. and you have to be there. I know that you generally get to your office at nine, but then, if you don't arrive there, nothing happens. *This* morning, if you are not there at nine, there's going to be trouble.

A man nearly twice as high as you are and weighing three times as much will interview you about it. In proportion to your present size – that is, so as to reproduce your proper schoolboy impression – he would be eleven feet high and weigh half a ton. And his proposition to you would be that if you can't come to school on time, you and he will have a few words to say about it.

However, luckily we needn't worry this time. By good luck here we are at school right on time. But, say, for heaven's sake! throw away that cigar! Have you forgotten that you can't smoke in school!

Now you can stand up and pray for five minutes – that will do you a whole lot of good – and then we'll go right into the arithmetic class.

Take your seat – yes, that little wooden bench; you don't have a cushion – and let's begin the arithmetic, the very same thing that you must have enjoyed so hugely in those old days you talk about.

First question for you: –

*John has 87 marbles, but he gives seven-ninths of them to Edwin, who in turn gives Arthur four-fifths of the difference between what he keeps and what John had at the start. How many marbles has Edwin?*

What! You can't answer it? But, my dear sir, that's the kind of thing that your little son of ten is doing every day. What? You say you will get your stenographer to do it. Yes, but in school you don't have a stenographer. Come along, try another.

*Mary is twenty years old. Mary is twice as old as Anne was when Mary was as old as Anne is now. How old is Anne?*

Stuck again? And yet you are so fond of explaining to the

children at home what a whale you were in arithmetic. I'm afraid that your chance of getting out at four is beginning to look mighty poor. No game of golf for you to-day. Not if that man eleven feet high knows it.

Well, let the arithmetic go. Perhaps next time you see your children working out "homework" in a corner of the living room, you'll be a little more compassionate. But just before we leave arithmetic, would you like to realize about how much of it you really have left? This – the following – is about your present size:

*A and B play billiards. A, having made eleven points, gains three more. How many has he now?*

Or perhaps you might even manage this:

*A. and B play bridge. A, having lost 67 cents, offers in payment one dollar. How much must B return to A in order to equate the difference?*

So you can see just where you stand as compared with these wonderful children of ours. Let's go on to the next class. Oh! you'd like to stop a few minutes and light a cigar! Can't be done. Don't you remember that in the dear old happy days, school never stopped. You'd like to telephone? You are not allowed to telephone. You've just remembered that you wanted to go down the street and buy some fishing tackle? Well, you *can't* go down the street. Not till after four and perhaps not even then. Come on into the next class and let's go on with the dear old happy days.

This time it is geography. We are going to learn the rivers of South America. Don't you remember how fascinating it was?

Let's begin now. Just say them over a few times – the Amazon with its branches, the Madeiro, the Puro, the Ukayale, the Ukuleke——

What? you've forgotten the first one already? Start again – the Madeiro, the Madingo, the Colorado Claro, the Hari Kari, the Berri-Berri.

Eh! how's that? It just occurs to you that all these fool names are crazy and that there's no sense in learning them. You can just as well tell your stenographer to call up the express company and ask *them.* Yes, but don't you remember that in the dear old school days, you *had* to learn this kind of stuff by the yard? Never mind, we'll let you off the remaining forty minutes of geography. Come along and let's have a whirl at English literature.

Ah! now you really brighten up. It's a favorite theory of yours that the literature class was a real treat, or at least that if you

only had listened to your teacher properly, you would have got something for your whole life.

Let's see. This is the class in English poetry and the children are to study Gray's "Elegy." Now sit tight in your seat and listen for the questions. First of all the teacher will read out a verse——

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

Now come the questions: –

"*Boast* – first boy, how do you distinguish *boast* from *boost*?"

"Would it be an improvement, second boy, to say, 'The *boost* of heraldry'? Distinguish this again, third boy, from 'the *booze* of heraldry.' "

"Heraldry – fourth boy, what is Greek for this?"

"Now in the next line, fifth boy, 'all that beauty.' All *what* beauty? and in the line below, sixth boy, 'lead but to'; explain the difference between *but to* and *but in*."

"Now for the whole class – take your exercise books and write a life of the poet Gray, being particular to remember that his grandfather was born in Fareham, Hants, or perhaps in Epsom, Salts."

Well, well! You can't stand it any more! You want to break away and make a rush for your club. How cozy it will feel when you seat yourself opposite a large beefsteak and when you light up a cigar as huge and dark as the Amazon itself. How glad you are that the waiter will not suggest that he will cut you off five-eights of two-thirds of the steak and keep the rest warm for twice as many minutes as half the time needed to eat the remainder.

I tell you, sir, that as you sit there with your napkin to your chin and look at the spring sunlight on the young leaves, you have reason to feel happy that your school days are over. You are wondering whether you will take half an hour's nap before you take the train to the golf club. And meantime the little boys are just going back to school, to give the Amazon another crack.

Won't you henceforth, my dear sir, drop that stuff about the happy school days, and try to make it up to the little sufferers when the holidays begin again?

## ✻ *The Fall Fair and the Autumn Exposition*

### A COMPARISON OF MIDGEVILLE IN 1880 AND MIDGE CITY IN 1928

LET US consider the 1928 season for the Fall Fairs. The first one opened up at Moose Factory, Hudson's Bay (first turn to the left after Halifax), on August the first (close of the summer); and the last one is to be held at Bahia Todos los Santos (Lower California) on December the sixth (first day of autumn).

Meantime, though people fail to notice it, the Fall Fairs, like everything else in this world, have been undergoing a constant process of change and evolution. The man who first put a fat woman in a tent and called her a side-show was a real Christopher Columbus; and the genius who first arranged a (high) bicycle race in which one of the contestants could break his neck, was second only in influence to Thomas Edison.

If one wants the proof of it, let us turn back a moment and compare the Fall Fair as it was and the Autumn Exposition as it is. We can take as our basis of comparison the fair that was held in Midgeville in 1880 and the exposition that is to go on this autumn in Midge City. They are really the same place except that in such a long time changes have come. Where the Methodist church used to stand, there is now the Pandemonium Building; and on the corners where you used to go into a saloon to buy your drinks, you now go into a drug store.

#### FALL FAIR AT MIDGEVILLE

Anno Domini 1880

The Fall Fair at Midgeville was advertised by a distribution of circulars which lasted for about one afternoon. That is to say, a man drove out with a horse and buggy and a little packet of printed notices, which he handed out to each of the country stores that had a post office in it. He covered a radius of five miles in each direction, and beyond that the Fall Fair was just a rumor. The advertisements just said:

MIDGEVILLE FALL FAIR NEXT TUESDAY

Now compare what happens in 1928.

The Big Fall Show (The Autumn Exposition) at Midge City

is preceded by a campaign of advertising which starts in the spring and never stops till the Big Show is pulled off in October. It is conducted by a publicity manager and a staff of college students who have taken a course of two semesters and a half on Fall Fair Advertising and it reaches all the way from the Middle West till the waves of it lap New York itself. It is done with placards such as

ARE YOU GOING TO MIDGE CITY?

But even that is rather inferior advertising. Much better is simply a placard

ARE YOU GOING?

That starts the people in New York thinking (a hard thing to do), and then later when they see in some other place a hundred miles away, another placard

MIDGE CITY! RAH! RAH!

they can hardly keep away from the Fall Fair.

THE AGRICULTURAL EXHIBIT

In the old days, at Midgeville in 1880, the main thing, in fact, the chief idea of the Fair, was the Agricultural Exhibit. It was place in a long wooden shed and you didn't need to ask where it was. You *knew* where it was as soon as you came within a hundred yards of it. You didn't need to *see* it either. You would have known it was there in the dark. And you didn't need to hear it. You just somehow were quite sure that this was it.

When you went in, you saw a huge hog in a pen and a farmer looking at the hog while the hog looked at the farmer. This was the farmer who had raised the hog and he had already looked at it all summer. But at present he is one of the judges of the Show and he is judging the hog. This is terribly hard to do because it is the only hog in the Show.

Next to that is a pen with a huge cow, and a farmer looking at the cow, and as they both have blue ribbons on, you know that they have taken the prize.

The whole Agricultural Exhibit was done that way. But compare: –

MIDGE CITY AUTUMN EXPOSITION
THE BEAUTY SHOW

Do they have a show of fat hogs at the Midge City Autumn Exposition of to-day? Well, I should rather guess not! There is perhaps a shed somewhere away in the back of the place with a

hog or two in it. But that is merely to draw off the farmers and keep them away from the Show.

The main big feature is the Beauty Show, at which the award is made as to which of the twelve girls is to have the honor of being "MISS MIDGE CITY," and having her photograph in the papers all the way from Kansas City to Toronto. You don't need to talk of fat hogs when you look at this contest. They are not in it with this. And the judges are not farmers. Any man capable of judging this contest wouldn't stay on a farm a week.

Not that there was no variety at all in the Midgeville Fall Fair of 1880. It was understood even then that the human mind needs diversion and that the lighter shades must mingle with the graver side of life. No man can look at a hog all day without feeling the need of a change.

### THE SIDE SHOWS IN 1880

That was why they all had a Flower Show in another shed, a smaller shed on the other side of the grounds from the Agricultural Hall. In this shed you could see the most beautiful sweet peas raised by Daisy Murchison, and the most wonderful chrysanthemums grown by Flossie Fitzgerald, the minister's daughter: and, what was better still, Daisy and Flossie themselves looking at the flowers. So that wasn't so bad.

But, as a matter of fact, there was even more excitement than that in 1880. There were always two or three other little tents with banners over them; on one of them was the legend

### FAT WOMAN: COME IN AND HAVE A LOOK

In 1880, everybody, it seems, was crazy to have a look at a fat woman. Now nobody cares. Thin women are all the rage, and a fat woman would starve to death in her tent.

But in 1880 there she was sitting on a little camp stool on a raised dais; she weighed 375 pounds and round her stood a little group of rural people, with their mouths open and a hush of awe upon them much like the attitude of people in the basilica of St. Peter's at Rome.

The fat woman didn't have to do anything or say anything; and the people didn't say anything; they just *looked* at her. But even at that the morality of the whole thing was doubted; it was generally felt in 1880 that after a certain stage of fat a woman's place was at home.

After you had seen the fat woman, there was still in 1880 the Living Skeleton, and the Albino Boy, and the Man Born Without Ears, and a few other diversions of that sort. In 1880, the line between horror and amusement was not carefully drawn.

### THE SHOWS OF 1928

#### DESPERATE DEATH STUNTS BY DARE-DEVILS

But now in contrast with this the side-shows and side-lines of the Midge City Autumn Exposition of 1928. The side-shows have long since eaten up the show. In fact, nowadays they *are* the show. People don't care any longer to see a hog stand still or a trotting horse trot. They come in the hope that one of the aviators will break his neck, or that the parachute man's parachute will fail to open and that he will be dashed to pieces on the ground.

That, of course, is what all the wild advertising is aimed at; you see in the publicity publications, for instance: –

#### DEATH-DEFYING DIVE BY DIVINE DIVER

and you will find that one big feature of the fair will be a dive by Señorita Marguerita Marcosa from a platform a hundred and fifty feet high, through flames of gasoline, onto a passing airplane, and from that to a parachute. If they could think of anything else to dive her through, they'd put her to it. The thing is to come as near to killing the Señorita as the law allows, with a half hope of the real thing. Hence all the fireworks, and the airplanes and speedway stuff.

Little do the people realize that the Señorita is really Daisy Murchison, the same girl who sold the flowers in 1880, or, if you like it, her daughter. But she learned calisthenics at the Midgeville High School, and now she's doing stunts. They only call her Señorita because that sounds better in case she gets killed.

In any case, Daisy isn't the only one taking a risk round the Midge City Autumn Exposition of 1928. The air is full of aviators leaping out of their machines, and women in mid-air hanging on to ropes with their teeth, and parachutes flying round like shingles on a windy day.

And the earth is as bad as the air. On the speedway there are motors and motorcycles whirling past at such a terrific rate that you have a fine chance any afternoon of the Fair to see a really terrible accident. Add to that the Human Fly crawling up the edge of the Midge City Pandemonium Building and killing himself (by statistics) one day in every twenty-five, and you see that the opportunity is excellent.

Altogether I don't know which was best, the little old fair with the hogs and the flowers and Flossie Fitzgerald and the Fat Woman or the Big Show of 1928 with the noise and racket and sputtering fireworks and brain-curdling death stunts.

But I rather suspect that they are much the same thing. Human nature being still human nature, the people of 1880 probably got more or less the same feeling out of it all as we do now. But with that I leave it to the psychoanalysts.

## ✻ *Extinct Monsters*

### ALL THAT WILL BE LEFT OF OUR HOUSEHOLD PETS IN 1,000 YEARS

TRAINED observers, such as the readers of this book, who notice anything that comes under their eyes even at a distance of six inches, cannot have failed to realize that our household animals are doomed to extinction. "I doubt," said an eminent social theorist the other day, himself one of the keenest of contemporary observers, "whether there are as many horses on Fifth Avenue as there are motor cars. Certainly there are none in the larger hotels."

It is a subject of equally common remark that the dog is vanishing. Hydrophobia on the one hand and the motor truck on the other are breaking up the long-standing compact of friendship between man and the dog. "I doubt very much," says a contemporary writer on social science, "if it is possible henceforth to raise pups on Fifth Avenue."

In the same vein, a brilliant writer in a magazine of last month, in an article on *The Passing of the Dog*, declares that in a half hour's walk in New York he did not pass a single dog.

Nor are the horse and the dog all. The decreasing numbers of the house-fly struck a first note of alarm last summer. The bat, once a familiar feature of the American home, is now seldom found except in an aviary. The moth can only be kept alive at an inordinate cost in camphor.

In short, it requires no great effort of the imagination to see that in a few more generations our household pets of the present will be the extinct monsters of the past. There will be nothing left of them except the kind of information that will be handed out somewhat after the following fashion:

I

## THE HORSE

*(As viewed in the light of extracts from the current press of the year* 3000 A.D.)

NEW YORK, Jan. 1, 3000 A.D. – Visitors to the Zoölogical Gardens (Extinct Animals Section) should not fail to take advantage of the unique opportunity now offered of seeing an actual living horse, perhaps the last specimen of its species. This interesting survival of a past age was found attached to what has been deciphered as a taxicab – itself a relic of unknown purpose – in the interior of China. Through the energies of the directors of our municipal museum, the animal was secured from its owners and flown yesterday to New York.

The horse is open to the public daily from 10 A.M. until 4 P.M., and is attracting large crowds of sightseers. In shape, it resembles somewhat an earlier type of helicopter flying machine, the legs being pivoted at the corners, though seemingly in a position too rigid for successful flight.

Professor Plink, the famous authority on the zoölogical remains of the twentieth century, is of the opinion that the horse was unable to fly. "It is difficult," he said, in a lecture delivered in the monkey-house of the Zoo last evening, "to conceive that the horse's legs could make more than three revolutions to the second."

The same authority explained that the horse was clearly distinct from the cow and the bull, there being features of difference easily recognizable by the expert.

It appears that the horse for many centuries was used by mankind as an engine of locomotion. When the animal was put into use, the pilot seated himself midway on its back, using his heels against its sides as a form of gear control. Contrary to many misleading historical references, no gasoline was put into the horse. A speed of three and even four miles an hour is said to have been maintained.

The last known use of the horse appears to have been in connection with the mounted policemen who were a familiar feature of civic life during the Age of Bandits in the earlier twentieth century. Experience showed that a policeman on the ground offered too easy a mark and could easily be teased or even kidnapped, whereas a policeman on horseback was elevated into a position of relative security.

Old prints of the period depict for us the mounted city police in their quaint uniforms asleep on their horses.

It is announced that the enterprising directors of our Metro-

politan Museum may shortly be able to secure for us a perfect specimen of a cow, including the peculiar apparatus by which it produced gasoline.

II

*(From a Young People's Encyclopedia of Useful Knowledge*, A.D. 4026)

The Dog (pronounced dog, or perhaps dorg; some authorities prefer dawg): An extinct carniverous mammalian quadruped of the late Grammoradial Age. It lived partly on human trousers and partly on refuse such as beefsteak, lamp chops, and deviled kidneys.

Owing to its savageness and ferocity, the Dog was in great demand with our ancestors. In the days when the habit of living was in single families in isolated houses, often separated from all other dwellings by iron railings, the dog was of the greatest value in keeping unsolicited visitors at a distance. (See under *Book Agent and Canvasser*; see also the article on *Life Insurance*.)

Of the various kinds or breeds of dogs thus maintained, we may mention the terrier, used for biting the ankles; the hound, used for pursuing pedestrians; the Bull Dog, for eating tramps; and the Lap Dog, for indoor biting. In addition to these, the Great Dane, used by the rich for biting the poor, may be mentioned along with the Mongrel, used by the poor for biting the rich.

From contemporary records we learn that persons who attached themselves to a Dog developed the greatest fidelity towards it, following it around all day, and walking great distances after it, often through broken country. Before the era of flying, it is said that Dog-Walking was a familiar pastime, every Dog permitting himself to be accompanied by one, two, or even more persons.

III

THE HOUSE-FLY

*(From the Same Authority)*

The House-Fly (not to be confused with the Bat, the Hornet, and other household pets of the same epoch) appears to have been a prime favorite with our ancestors. The bright, merry ways of the little fellow, his shiny coat, his glossy wings, and his large eyes twinkling with merriment, endeared him to the household. No household, in fact, was complete, at least in the bright season of summer without its complement of the cheery little

fellows, buzzing against the window-panes, or sitting floating on the milk.

Fly-raising usually began in the spring. The careful housewife set out large cans filled with what was called at that epoch Garbage (see under *Garbage in the Twentieth Century*; see also under *Salad, Mixed Grill, and Hash*) placed in sunny corners and liberally coated with fly-eggs, collected by sweeping up the accumulated dust in the corners and angles of the room. A trained housekeeper thus raised anywhere from one to ten thousand flies in a season.

As recently as one hundred years ago, the fly needed, it would seem, but little sleep, and during the night would sit beside his master's bed, ready to call him at the first light of dawn by a playful buzzing in his ear. Surly indeed was the sluggard who could resist the little fellow's winsome invitation to come out and chase him on the lawn.

The care and raising of the Fly occupied a large part of the time of the women-folk of our ancestors. A Fly is reported to have been seen alive, sitting on one of the piles of a pier in the Hudson River, looking disconsolately at the water. Since that time the Fly is only found in the museum. There is a good Fly in the famous Morgan collection and there are two in the British Museum.

## ✻ *The Passing of the Back Yard*

### ANOTHER SOCIAL REVOLUTION COMING STRAIGHT AT US

WE HAVE just found such a charming apartment, said my young friend Mrs. Fanlight. "John and I are perfectly fascinated with it. It's wonderful."

"Have you? Are you? Is it?" I answered.

"It has simply everything," the young lady went on, "heated and lighted and all that, of course, and then an ice cupboard run by steam or something so that we don't have to buy any ice."

"It sounds delightful," I said.

"Isn't it? And there's a patent kind of thing that washes the dishes, and an ironing board that falls down out of the wall,

a place where the garbage burns itself up – in fact, there is absolutely everything."

"And how," I asked, "do you get from it to the Back Yard?"

"The Back Yard?"

"Yes, how do you manage? Do you go down steps, or in an elevator or what, to get to it?"

"Why, there isn't any Back Yard. What on earth would we want that for?"

"But what about a rain-water barrel," I persisted, "haven't you got one?"

"Why, of course not."

"But suppose you wanted to get some soft water to wash in – what do you do about it? And do you mean to say you have no ash heap? And where do you hang the clothes? How do you throw things away?"

"I think the janitor attends to all that. And of course the clothes are dried in the patent way by squirting water over them."

"And where do the children play?"

"The children," said Mrs. Fanlight, "why, there's a community playroom in the apartment with mechanical rocking horses and with an imitation grass plot made of rubber. It's perfectly wonderful."

"I see," I said, "and you don't need a Back Yard any more."

"We never thought about it," she said.

And with that I left her, very sorrowful. For I realized that with the advance of the rapid age in which we live, another great social revolution is being noiselessly effected – the passing of the Back Yard.

. . . . .

Others have deplored the passing of this and of that which marks the transformation of our time. Tears have been shed over the passing of the stage coach, and the sailing ship, the passing of the West, and the Passing of the Third Floor Back.

Let it be for me to drop a tear over the ashes – no, *into* the ashes – of the Back Yard. With the advent of the Up-to-Date Apartment Castle, the Boulevard Movement, and the new cleanliness, this beautiful little area of secluded life is vanishing from our cities.

Let me, as a matter of useful historical record, set down what a Back Yard used to be like; or rather, perhaps it will serve the purpose better if I describe it as it will no doubt be written up in the Social Encyclopedias of a Hundred Years Hence, thus:

*Back Yard* (*Old Eng.*: Bugge Yearde. *French*, Yarde de Derrière. *Ital. Yardo di Bacco*). This name was given to an irregular space in the form of a rectangular parallelogram that was marked out behind the houses of the nineteenth century. The back yard was surrounded by a board fence intended for cats to sit on.

Along the base of the fence of a Back Yard extended a flower bed in which all the flowers had died and on which had fallen loose stones, half bricks, and other mineral refuse. The growth of burdocks among these still helped to preserve the name "flower bed" in domestic use. It is said that in the spring time of the year the owners of the Back Yards were often seen digging furiously among the burdock roots with a view to reviving the "flower bed."

It was a frequent practice at such times to insert dahlia roots, gladiolus bulbs, and tulips. The digging, however, was all over by the end of May and nothing but the burdocks ever came up.

A Back Yard usually contained one tree, from which most of the larger branches had been sawed off square and which was said to be an apple tree. The apple tree was used for climbing, for clothes lines, for cat hunting, etc., etc. In the leafiest time of the year, by placing a broken chair at a suitable astronomical angle so as to allow the sun's rays to be partially intercepted, a distinct sensation of shade was abtainable.

The rain-barrel (first introduced by the Romans) and the ash-can (introduced by Charlemagne) were familiar features of the Back Yard.

The principal inhabitants of the Back Yard were children, of whom there were still a great many in the large cities in the nineteenth century. Indeed, the Anti-Child Law of the Apartment House Epoch is thought to have greatly assisted in the disappearance of city children.

The Back Yard was used by the children as a general playground, as a football field, as a golf course, as a hockey rink, and as a bowling alley. By an unwritten law of the period, the Rain-Barrel, the Ash-Heap, and the Apple Tree were regarded as the perquisites of children. By a pretty custom also, the children were permitted to smear their faces with the coal dust of the Ash-Heap, and to claim as treasure trove any article found in the Back Yard. The children were assisted in the Back Yard by a Dog (see article *Dog*), an animal now extinct.

The passing of the Back Yard is said to have brought a peculiar loneliness to the surviving city children. There is even a

legend, sometimes whispered, that the souls of the little children who once played in the Lost Back Yard still haunt the sky-scraping apartments that have replaced their vanished playground. But this is probably not true. Their souls are nearer to the sky than that.

# SHORT CIRCUITS IN CURRENT LITERATURE

## ✻ *The Literary Sensations of 1929*

### A CONFIDENTIAL GUIDE TO THE NEW BOOKS

Now that the year 1928 is upon us – so far upon us – it is time for publishing houses to make their book announcements for 1929. As a result of inquiries made to a number of leading firms, therefore, I am able to make known to readers of this book that the literary output of the year now opening – in the publishing calendar – is likely to exceed in brilliance anything accomplished in the past.

The publishers themselves, usually so reticent about the merit of their own books, admit that they never saw a brighter prospect. In nearly every department of literature, from children's books down to fundamentalism, the year promises extraordinary sensations.

For example, in the realm of children's literature itself a special feature wlil be the addition of one more notable book to those written by mere children but read with delight by young and old. This little volume, entitled "Willie Nut: His Book," will take its place at once not only in child literature, but in the literature of nuts. It is the work of one who is not merely a child, but who is, to all intents and purposes, a complete imbecile.

Willie Nut was discovered last year. In fact, I found him. The story of my discovery of Willie is quite simple, and may be related in a few words. I came across him in the course of an afternoon walk in the country. The child, whose home is of the humblest, was cutting wood in the yard with a bucksaw. Something in the extraordinary simplicity of the boy's big face and the length of his ears attracted my attention. "Surely," I said, half aloud to myself, "this boy must have written a book. He has all the marks of it."

At the word "book," I saw a big tear rise in the boys' eye. "Oh, sir!" he said, "do you think you could possibly get a New York firm to publish it?" Then he added modestly as his head drooped over the saw, "I wrote it only for myself, sir, but if there is any money in publishing it, count me in."

In a few hours I was speeding to New York with the bulky MS. (Willie wrote on wall paper) in my valise. The first publisher to whom I showed it declared it at once (without reading it) to be the most remarkable story of the century.

I must not anticipate the success of the book by quoting from it here. Suffice it to say that it contains simply the thoughts of a child, such as a child would think when thinking in its own childlike way. To that extent the book reproduces merely the work of the other child prodigies of 1927 and the years preceding. But the interesting point of difference is that Willie Nut is half-witted. The others were not even that.

This point is clearly established by the following sworn certificate which accompanies Willie's work. It is from his pastor:

*Certificate from Willie's Pastor*

*I cheerfully certify that so far as I have observed him, Willie Nut has always appeared to me to be three-quarters deficient. I am delighted to learn that it has transpired that he possesses a literary genius of the highest order.*

*(Signed) (Rev.) Ebeneza Ebron.*

*Post Script. I think that seven-eights would be a more exact estimate.*

. . . . .

Closely connected with this class of literature are the beautifully illustrated fairy-tales, which constitute a unique feature among the books of to-day. The only objection to these in the past has been that in the course of centuries the material has worn a little thin and the Old-World setting no longer appeals to the children of the present. In spite of the beautiful illustrations, they turn away from such ancient stories as *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* and *Beauty and the Beast* in search of a more modern environment.

To meet this difficulty, a leading New York house (who specially request me not to name them) will bring out an up-to-date volume of revised stories under the title of

FIFTH AVENUE FAIRY STORIES

The titles of the collection speak for themselves. *Beauty and the Boost* is a delightful story, modeled on an old favorite. A rich merchant of Oneonta, N.Y., sets out in his motor car on a journey to New York. His three daughters each ask for a present. The first one wishes a diamond sunburst, the second a fur coat, but the youngest and most beautiful asks her father merely to secure her a theatrical position on the stage. The merchant

easily buys the diamond sunburst and the coat, but is in deep perplexity how to obtain the theatrical position. Pondering over this in his car, in a fit of abstraction he runs over a man on Fifth Avenue and is put in jail for damaging the sidewalk. His daughter, on hearing this, rushes to his side. In the police court, she sees the man whom he ran over, that is, over whom he ran. The latter falls in love with her and dismisses his complaint. In gratitude she accepts his hand and he turns out to be a theatrical producer.

. . . . .

Of equal merit, perhaps, is *Jack the Joint-Killer.* It appears that Jack, after having killed the Welsh giant with three heads, was engaged to enforce the Volstead Act. In doing this, he got acquainted with practically all the Joints in New York.

I leave to the reader's own perusal *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood Alcohol, The Old Woman who lived in the Soo* (on the Canadian side and unable to bring her children into the United States); *Jack and the Bean Head,* and many other charming old stories now at last presented in a readable form.

### MORE ENGLISH REVELATIONS

Another welcome feature will be a further series of English biographies and memoirs, throwing into a stronger light than ever the Victorian Period. The tremendous success of the "Confidential Memoirs" of Lady C. and Mrs. A. and the "Diary" of Lord C. has encouraged other leaders of Society to follow in their tracks. The brilliant and vivacious Lady X (aged 70: said to be the most beautiful woman in England) will be first in the field. Her autobiography will contain the most astounding revelations. It appears that not only was Disraeli (of whose perfervid nature it might be expected) wildly in love with her, but also Mr. Gladstone and John Bright. Gladstone, it seems, was once indiscreet enough to write to her: "Dear Little Goo-Goo: Meet me tonight at half after midnight at the door of the House of Commons and come and eat supper at the Y.W.C.A. cafeteria. I will be wearing a pair of gray trousers with a wide check. A thousand kisses."

Even more interesting is the political side of Lady X's memoirs. The reader simply gasps for breath at the revelations that are made of the inner workings of English political life. It appears that the whole of Gladstone's Egyptian policy was really based on conversation with Lady X across a tennis set. Lord Salisbury was sent to the Congress of Berlin because the Queen thought he looked better in a top hat than any other available

person. Lord Randolph Churchill always carried peanuts in his pockets. Nor is the book, brilliant and witty as is every page of it, a work lacking in sound and serious thought. "It seems to me," writes Lady X, "that America has a great future before it," and again, "I fear that there is an essential difference between the Orientals and ourselves."

But lack of space compels me to leave over for another time the further announcements of The Literary Sensations of the coming year.

## ✻ *Children's Poetry Revised*

### HOW THE DEAR OLD POEMS OF OUR CHILDHOOD NEED TO BE BROUGHT UP TO DATE

It has occurred to me that many of the beautiful old poems on which the present and preceding generations were brought up are in danger of passing into oblivion. The circumstances of this hurried, rapid age, filled with movement and crowded with mechanical devices, are rendering the older poetry quite unintelligible to the children of to-day.

For example, when "young Lochinvar had come out of the West" – we need to know at the start that this doesn't mean the Middle West. We learn also that he came on a "*steed.*" What is a "*steed*"? Few children of to-day realize that the huge, clumsy animals that they see hauling the garbage wagons are "steeds." They would much hore likely think that if young Lochinvar had "*a Steed,*" it meant something the same as if he had a Chrysler or a Ford; in other words, he had a this year's *Steed.*

Similarly when the poem says, "He stayed not for brake and he stopped not for stone" – the meaning is taken to be that he left in such a hurry that he didn't go into the garage and get his brakes tightened up.

Or let us say that "*The Boy Stood on the Burning Deck.*" Who cares? Certainly not a generation that thinks nothing of reading in its paper, "*Boy Falls in Burning Aeroplane.*"

It seems reasonable, therefore, that if the older poetry, the heritage of our race, is to remain, someone has got to revise it.

I wish I could offer to do it myself. I fear that I can lay so little claim to being a professional poet that I must leave the task to more competent hands. But I might perhaps indicate by a few samples the ways in which the necessary changes might be made.

Sometimes a mere alteration of the title would do a lot. Thus the *Charge of the Light Brigade* might be, the *Light Brigade C.O.D.* or perhaps *The Cash and Carry of the Light Brigade.* Then there is that melodious masterpiece of Edgar Allan Poe, which should read henceforth *"Quoth the Radio, Nevermore."*

But in other cases the poem has got to be overhauled throughout. There is something in the environment it represents that does not correspond to the life that the children see to-day. I'll give an example. There was, when I was young, a poem that everybody knew and loved, that ran: –

*I remember, I remember*
*The house where I was born*
*And the little window where the sun*
*Came peeping in at morn.*
Etc., etc., etc. . . .

. . . . .

I needn't quote the rest of it. The essential thought is in the lines above. But alas! The poem is dropping out; It no longer fits. Here, however, is a revised version that may keep it going for years.

*I wish I could remember*
*The house where I was born*
*And the little window where perhaps*
*The sun peeped in at morn.*

*But father can't remember*
*And mother can't recall*
*Where they lived in that December——*
*If it was a house at all.*
*It may have been a boarding-house*
*Or family hotel,*
*A flat or else a tenement.*
*It's very hard to tell.*

*There is only one thing certain from my questioning as yet,*
*Wherever I was born, it was a matter of regret.*

. . . . .

That, I think, reproduces more or less the spirit of the age. If some one would just put it into really good up-to-date poetry – without any rhyme in it, and with no marks of feet in it, and without putting it into lines – it might go into any present-day anthology.

But let me, in my own halting and imperfect way, try another one. There used to be – either for recitation or for singing — a very pathetic poem about a little girl begging her father to "come home." The opening stanza ran: —

*Father, dear father, come home with me now;*
*The clock in the steeple strikes one.*
*You promised, dear father, that you would come home*
*As soon as your day's work was done.*

The scene, of course, was laid on the other side of the Eighteenth Amendment. The picture that went with the song showed, from the outside, a little tavern, or saloon, with curtained windows and a warm red light behind them. Out in the snow was the girl, singing. And father was in behind the red curtains. And he wouldn't come out! That was the plot. Father's idea was that he would stay right where he was — that it had Home beaten four ways.

Now all of that is changed. The little lighted tavern is gone. Father stays home, and the children of to-day have got to have the poem recast, so as to keep as much of the pathos as may be, but with the scene reversed. Here it is, incomplete, perhaps, but suggestive.

FATHER, DEAR FATHER, GO OUT

*Oh, father, dear father, why won't you go out?*
*Why sit here and spoil all the fun?*
*We took it for granted you'd beat it down town*
*As soon as your dinner was done.*

*With you in the parlor, the boys are so glum,*
*No games and no laughter about.*
*Oh, father, you put the whole house on the bum,*
*Dear father, please, father, go out.*

. . . . .

In some cases our old once favorite poems are based on the existence of institutions that are passing away and that are

scarcely known to the children of to-day. A case in point is Longfellow's *Village Blacksmith*. In this the poet tells us that under the spreading chestnut tree the village smithy stands and adds that the children love to look in at the door and catch the sparks by the hatful.

All this, I fear, must be altered from top to bottom. There is no smithy now, and no horses to be shod and no sparks, and many children don't ever wear hats. Even the old-fashioned sing-song rhyme gets tiresome to a modern ear. The whole poem must be recast to suit the times. I should propose putting it into what is called free verse, something as follows:

THE MAIN STREET GARAGE
FREE AIR

On the corner of the main street stands the principal garage.

The garage man is a man of singular muscular development.

Children coming home from school like to watch him punch the gasoline.

On Sunday he goes to church, whenever any of the cars of the congregation break down.

In this way he not only earns a night's repose, but even now and then he can take a trip to New York, and go without repose for a whole night.

. . . . . .

And with this I leave the topic for other pens and the idea for other minds. I am quite sure that if some one in one of the English departments of the colleges would take up this work, there might be a lot in it.

## ✻ *Illustrations I Can Do Without*

### SOME GENTLE SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CONTEMPORARY ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINES

HAVE YOU ever noticed, my dear reader – but of course you have; you notice everything – how illustrations in the picture magazines always run to certain types? Somebody starts a particular line of picture and somebody else copies it, and so it goes on till it becomes a sort of type picture. Then the subscribers begin to

look for it regularly and the editor feels that he must have it.

Here is a case in point, taken from the English illustrated weeklies, the high-class press that is put together "by gentlemen for gentlemen."

Every week in every paper of this class you will see a photograph of a lady in a tweed suit sitting on a camp-stool, and beside her a gentleman in a tweed suit standing up and leaning on a stick. There are probably a lot of dogs around and the picture carries some such legend as the following:

*With the Yardsborough Beagles: Lady Vera de Verest and Mr. Robinson*

Why it is always these two, I don't know. You would think that Lord Vere de Verest ought to get in sometimes; and even Mrs. Robinson might have a look-in. But apparently not. Wherever they are, it is always Lady Vera de Verest and Mr. Robinson. That combination seems to have a sort of "class" to it.

And they always turn up in different places, according to the season, and the place always has a touch of the incomprehensible about it. For example, you see them in the same attitude with three or four dead partridges, or crows, lying in front of them and the legend:

*With the Guns at Dumfoolish Castle: Lady Vera de Verest and Mr. Robinson.*

I've seen them depicted not only with the Beagles at Yardborough and with the guns at Dumfoolish, but with the pigeon-traps at Monte Carlo and with the Spitz in Spitzbergen.

I imagine that they must write letters such as:

*My dear Lady Vera de Verest:*

*What do you say to a run over to Spain so as to get photographed with me and the bulls of Madrid? If you are on, bring your camp-stool and meet me there.*

*MR. ROBINSON.*

Or else, something of this sort:

*Dear Mr. Robinson:*

*What do you say to our being photographed "with the snakes at Darjeeling? If we go out to India, we could arrange our schedules to meet and be photographed on the way at least*

*three times – "with the looters on the Riviera" and "with the plagues of Egypt." So we should not miss a single week. Do come.*

*VERA.*

. . . . .

I suppose that here too, as in all such cases, there is the usual tragic background of those left behind. I can imagine Lord Vere de Verest, the dignified gentleman whose home in thus made a mockery, walking across from De Vere Castle to the cottage where Mrs. Robinson lives, an open letter in his hand.

"Where are they now?" she queries gently, as he holds out the letter with a sob.

"With the snakes in Darjeeling," he answers, as kindly as he can.

"And where do they appear next?" she murmurs, a note of pain in her voice in spite of herself.

"They are to be with the Hoodoos of Madagascar," he groans.

"Edward," she says, addressing him by his Christian name for the first time in fifty years and laying her hand on his coat sleeve, "don't you think, dear, that *we* might do a little of this kind of thing ourselves? If the editors of the *Stretch,* and the *Prattler,* and the *Outstander* want pictures of this sort, let us see what we can do. There is a kind of little farmyard behind the cottage and I have a camera. Come out with me."

And if the week after that the illustrated press carried a picture entitled "*Lord Vere de Verest and Mrs. Robinson looking at a pigsty,*" it would be at least as interesting as The Beagles and The Yaks and it might stop a lot of trouble.

. . . . .

Another form of magazine illustration that I can do without, or without which I can do, is the face, head, and shoulders of a man done in rather smudgy ink. It has written under it, "*Colonel Robinson, the New Governor of the Virgin Islands,*" or "*Pilsudski, Dictator of Poland,*" or perhaps "*Executed last week at Sing Sing.*" It doesn't matter what is under it; it really is always the same picture.

Hitherto I used to wonder how this picture got into the magazines. Just by chance a few days ago in visiting the staff of a periodical, I found the explanation. I happened in the corridor of the building to get into conversation with the very man from whose face all the photographs are taken.

"You are quite right," he said to me; "they are all the same picture. It saves such a lot of time and trouble. I am just going out now to get photographed as the '*New Mikado of Japan*' and

then the same picture will appear on another page as '*Lloyd George, Reappointed Leader of the British Liberals,*' and on the back as '*Mrs. Annie Besant, the Venerable Theosophist.*' "

"Is it possible?" I said.

"Quite so. And by the way, how did you like that one of me last week called '*The New Mayor of Miami.*' I thought it was a peach. And there was a dandy of me called '*Yuan Chung Chow, Leader of the Cantonese Rebels,*' and the same picture called '*Admiral Ferguson, Who Will Fight Yuan Chung Chow——*' "

"But stop," I said, "doesn't the public ever——"

"Nonsense!" said the man. "Why, the other day there were two pictures of me side by side – they just looked really the same. One was called '*The Oldest Father-in-Law in Europe, Jean Jacques Dubois,*' and the other (used to illustrate an article on hold-ups) was labeled '*Youngest Crook That Ever Stole a Hundred Thousand.*' People looked at the magazine and said what a kind face the old father-in-law had, and they looked on the other page and said that you could see it was a crook.

"Listen," he continued, "you take this week's magazine, and cover up the names and see if you distinguish which is the one called '*Venerable Scientist Speaks*' and the one called '*Will Serve Ten Years.*' Try to distinguish '*Lady Chatelaine Entertains the Poor*' from '*Arctic Explorer Returns Home*'; try to separate out '*Queen Mary Welcomes the Duke of York*' from '*Boisterous Scene in a Viennese Beer Garden.*' You can't. All the pictures in the magazine," he went on with an excitement that was almost violent, "are just me. I'm Queen Mary, I'm Yuan Chung Chow, I'm——"

And just at that moment a man dressed in a sort of uniform stepped up to us in the corridor and said:

"Excuse me, sir. I had lost track of this gentleman. He's under my charge. I hope he's not been disturbing you."

The man himself as he was led away was still saying, "I'm *Queen Mary,* I'm *Thomas Edison,* I'm *Royal Birthday,* I'm *Admiral Ferguson.*"

# ✻ *Our Summer Pets*

## AS PRESENTED BY OUR ENTHUSIASTIC NATURE WRITERS

### I

### THE HOUSE FLY

THE HOUSE FLY (*fuscus domesticus*) is at his very best during the months of August and September. It is then that his coat is at its glossiest and that his beautiful back plate, or caparace, shines with its highest luster. His lovely eyes also take on at this season (the love season of the fly) their deepest color, while his soft vibrant note is tuned to the voice of nature itself.

At this time of year the fly-collector, or even the amateur, should have no difficulty in finding one or more perfect specimens of this magnificent multiped.

"Alone among the odiferous quadrumana or cephalopods," writes an eminent buggist, "the fly seems capable of thriving wherever man can live and takes on with ease the environment of our civilization."

Indeed, it appears that the house fly is found all over North America, South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, and the nature student needs therefore no further apparatus for his study than to buy a house. A suitable house having been selected, he may put in one, two, or more flies with entire certainty of a good result.

Flies are not difficult to rear and feed and with a little care they will thrive well and even increase. A pan of milk set out overnight, or the remains of a tin of salmon set on a plate with a little marmalade, is as much as any fly asks or needs when in good health.

It is perhaps not generally known that the fly can be tamed. "During the past summer," writes Mr. Summernut, one of the keenest of our nature students, "I succeeded, after several efforts, in taming a fly.

"When we became better acquainted he would light on the table beside me and nibble at the crumbs near my plate. Once while venturing too near the rim of my tumbler he fell into the

milk. At other times he would actually alight on my shoulder and rub his cheek against mine.

"My house fly was at his friendliest during the drowsy hour of the morning just before the time came for my getting out of bed. One heard a gentle buzzing and there was the merry little fellow peeping over the edge of the coverlet, his big eyes sparkling with fun. He seemed to say 'Peek-a-boo – time to get up!' No use to wave him away.

"Back he came again with the same friendly buzz as if inviting me to hop out of bed and take a run on the lawn. The only thing to do was to take a towel with a knotted end and swat him over the head with it. This would deter the little fellow and I would then see him fly across to the window pane and sit rubbing his head with his hind leg as if discouraged."

## II

## THE POTATO BUG

The potato bug (*buggo Colorado*) does best in a rich, sandy soil. It can be brought to its greatest natural perfection by planting within its easy reach a crop of potatoes either in rows or hills.

"It was my good fortune last summer," says Professor Allgone, the famous author of "Parisites and Paris Green," "to come into possession of a splendid pair of potato bugs, male and female.

"Both bugs were set out in the garden in a spot suitably chosen near a potato plant.

"To my great delight on visiting the garden on the third day, I found that the two young housekeepers had laid a rich nestful of eggs carefully set on the under side of a potato leaf. The joy of the parents reached its maximum when a few days later the eggs hatched into a group of tiny little buglets.

"Indeed, there is no telling to what height the ecstasy of the whole family might have gone had they not accidentally stumbled on some Paris Green carelessly left within their reach."

## III

## THE MOSQUITO

With the exception of the house fly, the mosquito is perhaps the most widely disseminated of our domesticated insects. He is to be found almost anywhere on verandas, on upper and lower balconies, on front and back steps; but he is seen at his best when tucked away behind the little white bed curtains that are specially provided for him.

It is here that he can most successfully be brought to a hand-to-hand conflict, which is his delight.

A mosquito, as seen under a microscope, is, to the naturalist, an object of equal delight. His four pair of eyes with double refracting lenses from which the light glitters in all directions are equaled only by the great sweep of his gossamer wings and the beautiful articulation of his sixteen legs.

Most striking of all is his powerful bill, armed on each side with teeth, like a double crosscut saw, with which he bores through the cranium of his enemy. The mosquito knows no half measures. He is out for blood. Hence comes his high personal courage which enables him to attack single-handed and unsupported an opponent of twenty thousand times his own weight.

Odds are nothing to him. He rushes into battle singing as he goes, selects the stoutest of his enemies, and seizes him in a death grip in the fattest part of his neck. The British bull-dog and the American eagle are cowards beside the mosquito.

Protection against the assaults of the mosquito has always presented a serious problem to the settlers and campers in our summer wildernesses. But by the trained naturalist, or nature lover, the difficulty is easily overcome.

The naturalist before setting out on his study smears himself with ham fat and oil of citronella, over which he spreads a thin layer of beeswax and asafetida. He then sprays his clothes with coal oil and drapes himself from the head down in a long white net. Thus prepared the naturalist need fear nothing outside of Bengal.

It is a pity to think that the mosquito, like the house fly, is threatened with extinction. There are said to be only a few billion million left. Even these are going – falling victims to their own high courage in their fierce assaults against our civilization like the Crusaders dashing against the Saracens.

But no doubt the efforts of the new Mosquito Preservation Society, one of the latest of our animal philanthropy efforts, will induce the government to step in before it becomes too late. A suitable reservation of land as a Mosquito Park may preserve for our descendants a few thousand million specimens of what was once the dominant animal of North America.

## IV

## THE SKUNK

The skunk, who is a high favorite, very high, with the nature lover, is a short cylindrical animal with a leg at each corner.

The skunk is an object of great beauty. Its magnificent fur coat, dark black with two lengthwise stripes of white, is perhaps unexcelled among the fur-bearing or odoriferous animals. Why, then, in spite of the beauty of the skunk, do we not like him? We all know, but we don't say.

The skunk is, by nature, a quiet, peace-loving, tame, and affectionate animal. He asks nothing more than to be near us. He does not bite, he cannot scratch, he makes no noise and only asks to be friends and to forget the past.

Why, then, do we not take him into our friendship?

The nature student who wishes to get into close contact with a skunk, and to see him at short range (his range is about nine feet and a half), must visit him in his own fastnesses in the northern wilds.

"I had the good luck last summer," writes Mr. Sleepout, the distinguished nature student who spent seven weeks in the Adirondacks with no other food than a combination suit and a bow and arrow, "to meet a skunk face to face. He was a splendid fellow easily eighteen inches long, with a beautifully arching back and sweep of tail. I had full time to admire the dainty way in which his ears joined his head and his head ran into his neck and his neck ended in his body.

"Crawling cautiously towards him I was almost within touching distance when the beautiful creature elevated itself on its glorious hind legs, sniffed the air about me with its exquisite snout, and then beat it into the deep woods."

## ✻ *The Old Men's Page*

### A BRAND NEW FEATURE IN JOURNALISM

I OBSERVE that nowadays far too much of the space in the newspapers is given up to children and young people. Open almost any paper, published in any British or American city, and you may find a children's page and a girls' page and a women's page – special columns for tiny tots, poetry by high-school girls, notes for boy scouts, fashion notes for young women, and radio hints for young men.

This thing is going too far – unless the old men get a chance.

What the newspapers need now is a special page for old men. I am certain that it would make an enormous hit at once.

Let me try to put together a few samples of what ought to go on such a page. My talented readers can carry it on for themselves.

I

NOTES FOR OLD MEN SCOUTS

A general field meeting of the (newly established) Old Men Scouts will be held next Saturday. The scouts will assemble at the edge of the pine woods about seven miles out of town. Every scout will tell his chauffeur to have the car ready for an early start, not later than ten-thirty. The scout will see that the chauffeur brings a full kit of cooking utensils and supplies. A good chauffeur can easily carry 150 pounds and the scout will see that he does it.

Each scout is to have a heavy greatcoat and a thick rug and folding camp-chair strapped together in a bundle and will see to it personally that these are loaded on the chauffeur.

Each scout, in advancing into the woods, will carry his own walking stick and will smoke his own cigar.

In passing through the woods, the scout is expected to recognize any trees that he knows, such as pine trees, lilac trees, rubber trees, and so forth. If in any doubt of the nature or species of a tree, the scout may tell the chauffeur to climb it and see what it is.

The scouts will also recognize and remark any species or genera of birds that are sitting on the path which are familiar to them, such as tame canaries, parrots, partridges, cooked snipe, and spring chicken.

Having arrived at an open glade, the scouts will sit about on their camp-chairs, avoiding the damp, while the chauffeurs kindle a fire and prepare lunch. During this time the Scout Master, and other scouts in order of seniority, may relate stories of woodcraft, or, if they can't think of any stories of woodcraft, they may tell any other kind that they know.

As exercise before lunch, the scouts may open the soda water bottles.

After lunch, each scout will place his rug and cushion under a suitable tree and smoke a cigar while listening in silence for any especial calls and wood notes of birds, bees, and insects, such as the cicada, the rickshaw, the gin-ricki, and others that he has learned to know. Should he see any insect whose call is not familiar to him, he should crawl after it and listen to it, or, if

he prefers, tell his chauffeur to follow it up.

At 5 P.M., the scouts should reload the chauffeurs and themselves, and, when all are well loaded, drive to any country club for more stories of woodcraft.

. . . . .

EVERY OLD MAN – being really just a boy on a disguised form – is naturally interested in how to make things. One column in the old men's page, therefore, ought to contain something in the way of

HINTS ON MECHANICS – CARPENTRY FOR OLD MEN

How to Make a Rustic Table. – Get hold of any hard-working rustic and tell him to make a table.

How to Make a Camera Stand. – Put it right on the table. It will stand.

How to Tell the Time by the Sun. – First look at your watch and see what time it is. Then step out into the sunlight with your face towards the sun and hold the watch so that the hour hand points directly at the sun. This will be the time.

How to Make a Book-Case. – Call up any wood factory on the telephone and tell them to cut you some plain boards, suitable for making a book-case. Ask them next where you can get nails. Then send your chauffeur to bring the boards and nails. Then advertise for a carpenter.

To stain your table, when it is complete, a good method is to upset soda water on it.

. . . . .

No column of the sort which I am here proposing would be complete unless it contained some sort of correspondence. And here the topic that is opportune and welcome to the old, as well as the young, is the eternal subject of love. But it must be treated in a way to suit it to those whose hearts have passed the first mad impulses of unrestrained youth.

PROBLEMS OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Mr. Elder, Bachelor's Court,
Lone Street:

I can quite understand your dilemma in regard to your cook. It is one that many a bachelor has had to face and to think out for himself, and I am sure that you will face it bravely and clearly.

You say that you do not know whether your cook loves you or not, and I gather that you do not give a hoot either way. But

the point is that she has an excellent offer to be cook in an Old Man's Home and you are likely to lose her. Your problem is whether to let her go and try to get another, or to marry her, or to move into the Home where she is going to cook.

. . . . . .

Mr. Oldspark, Evergreen Alley,
Blossom Street:

It is very difficult indeed to advise you, especially as you are at an age (you tell me you are only 61) when your heart is apt to run away with you. You say that three young girls each want to marry you. You have been letting one of them drive you out in her car and she has a certain right to think you have given her encouragement.

On the other hand, one of the others has taken you to the matinée. In the case of the third, though you do not know her so well, you were told by some one at the golf club that she had said that you were "a perfect darling."

You say that you are very fond of all three, but that you cannot tell whether what you feel is really love. It may be indigestion.

. . . . . .

Mr. O. O. Overslow, Linger Lodge:

Your case is one in which it is difficult for an outsider to give advice. You say that you have been paying attention to a lady, of about your own age, for a little over thirty years. You have taken her to an evening church service each third Sunday for some years back, and you have, for nearly ten years now, sent her an Easter card and an April fool card. Her father, who is ninety-six, is distinctly favorable to your suit, but as he has lost most of his faculties, he may not know one suit from another.

You rightly feel that you ought to be cautious and not act hastily. You have fifteen thousand a year of your own, but you hate to part with any of it.

Your problem is, should you propose to her, or wait a little? My advice is by all means wait – keep on waiting – wait till her father is dead, and her mother is dead, and you are half dead – and then propose to her and wonder why you have spent your life waiting.

Don't you remember – look back over thirty years and try to remember – that evening long ago when you stood with her on the bridge over the little river in the dusk of a summer evening, and so nearly, oh, so nearly, proposed to her? But you waited. You had only a thousand dollars a year then, so you waited.

And don't you remember five years later on, that winter even-

ing by the fireside when you were left alone with her for ten minutes, and again the words almost came to your lips. But you had only three thousand a year then, and you waited.

Oh, yes, my dear old friend, by all means keep on waiting. It is all that you are fit for.

. . . . .

J.J.X. – No, we don't lend money to old men through this column.

## ✻ *A Guide to the Underworld*

### A LITTLE UNSOCIAL REGISTER FOR THE USE OF READERS OF UP-TO-DATE FICTION

I AM given to understand – from the best and latest fiction and from the movies – that there is a place called the Underworld. By this I don't mean Hell; we know all about that, and all anxiety in regard to it has long since been removed except in the schools of Tennessee. No one outside of these schools, we understand, goes there now.

But the Underworld is quite different. Without it, our up-to-date fiction couldn't last a day. Just where it is or how you get to it, I don't know. But it is supposed to be filled with Apaches and Sleuths and Vampires and Master Criminals whose brains are so vast that they ramify over two continents.

Many people feel that if they could ever find this Underworld, they would leave home and never come back.

So let me set down here for persons interested a brief directory of the people of the Underworld put for convenience in the form of questions and answers. Any reader may test with these the extent of his knowledge of up-to-date fiction.

#### THE APACHE

Who is the most ordinary and frequent character found in stories of the Underworld?

A person called an Apache.

Right. What is he like?

Young, very pale, dressed with a black silk shirt around his abdomen, and smoking cigarettes at ten cents a package for fifteen hours a day.

Correct. What effect has this on his nervous system?

It works him up into a terrible state of irritability.

With what result?

This – that he would stick a knife into you in the dark if he had an opportunity.

Is there really anything terrible in this?

Nothing whatever. Of course an Apache would put a knife into you in the dark if he had a real chance. But then so would I. This distinction between people who would put knives into you and people who wouldn't is quite false and misleading. Most people would put knives into most people.

Personally, I have the strongest inclination in the world to put a knife into whole classes of people: actors, story tellers, ugly women who talk about themselves, plumbers, public lecturers – quite a long list of them.

All quite true, and now tell me what is an Apache really like?

If one could see the Apache as he really is, he would turn out to be nothing more than a silly young simp who is, let us say, a plumber's assistant by day, but can't stay home at night.

Exactly. And now tell me who is the principal female character in the Underworld?

### THE QUEEN OF GEHENNA

She is called, colloquially, the Queena Gehenna.

Tell me about her.

In every well regulated Underworld, there is always a lady designated by some such title as the Queena Gehanna. She is supposed to be the last word in vampires. Her beauty is supposed to be so alluring that she casts a spell for three or four blocks around. She would eat a man as quick as look at him.

Quite so. And does she really exist?

Oh, no. The Queena Gehenna is as much a myth as all the other characters of the Underworld. Her real name is Georgie Simpson, and she works as a cashier in a cafeteria and supports her mother. Georgie wouldn't really eat a man at all, and you ought to see the nice letters she writes to her cousin Joe in Keokuk, Iowa.

As a matter of fact, you see plenty of Queens of Gehenna all over the place. But they are not really dangerous – not when you know them. It is only when they are put into fiction that they look like that.

Absolutely right. And now tell me – are there any other women in the Underworld?

Lots of them – they are called Women of the Street, Women of the Pavement, Women of the Basement, Women of the Subway, Women of the Underground Railway; in short, women who inhabit any place more than ten feet below the level of the soil.

True. And what do these women turn into when they get older?

Each of them turns into what is called an *Old Crone* – the name given in the Underworld to any woman of sixty. Old Crones are supposed to be found, like mushrooms, in any dark cellar or underground dwelling.

What do they live on?

They live on gin. They would eat, but they have no teeth, or at best only one. An Old Crone calls everybody "dearie," but she would sell a human life, so it is always explained, for a drop of brandy, one drop. For a bottleful, she would sell a whole village. But after all, so would most of us. That's nothing.

Is there any way to reach the heart of an Old Crone?

Yes. She seems scarcely human, but if you remind her of her Lost Daughter, she breaks down and tears of gin run from her eyes. She will then betray the entire Underworld.

Are there really any such persons as Old Crones?

No. The Old Crone, like all the rest of the people of the Underworld, is just a myth. Fetch her up into the sunlight, dress her in a black alpaca suit, wipe her eyes, and she could then be used to sit and take hat checks at a theater with the best of them.

Very good. Now let me ask you a further question. The Underworld is full of mysteries. How do these get unraveled?

By means of a Sleuth.

What is that?

A Sleuth (plural Sleeth) is the name given in the Underworld to one who solves mysteries.

How does he do it?

The business of a Sleuth in the Underworld is to sit around apparently doing nothing, but in reality his brain is working with lightning rapidity. His favorite location is what is called a low drinking joint, and he sits there giving every sign of being drunk – lucky fellow – but he isn't. It is the rule of the Underworld that the way to investigate or find out anything really complicated is to get extremely drunk and go and sit in a joint.

In the course of time, some one is sure to say something, or rather to let something slip, which gives the whole mystery away. It often happens that the Sleuth, in the course of business,

gets badly beaten up; sometimes they merely knock him insensible (that never hurts him owing to the nature of his brain), but at other times they tie him hand and foot and throw him down a sewer, and it takes him nearly half an hour to crawl through.

All very correct. And now tell me, is there any Hero in a story that deals with the Underworld?

Oh, certainly a Hero. And a Heroine.

Never mind the Heroine – for a moment. Stick to the Hero. How can you distinguish him?

Very easily. He is always so completely disguised that you can tell him in a moment. Suppose, for example, you meet in the story a drunken sailor asleep on a bench and quite oblivious to the world – that's the Hero. Suppose there comes in an aged man very much bent and with a white beard eighteen inches long – that's the Hero. At any moment he can unbend himself and unbob his beard and there he is.

Is not the Hero in reality very strong and athletic?

Oh, very. He can break an iron bar with his teeth, and he played end man on his college ping-pong team.

All quite right. And what is the Hero doing all through the story?

Looking for the Heroine.

Can he find her?

No. He always looks in exactly the wrong place. He enters one end of the Underground Cabaret at the very moment she goes out of the other.

Quite so.

And now what about the Heroine? How do you know her?

By her extraordinary innocence. She knows nothing. It is doubtful whether she knows that any two sides of a triangle are greater than the third side, or how much 47 times 13 is.

And what is she doing in the story?

Hard to say. She just wandered in from her home.

Her home. Where was that?

The site is not indicated clearly. Somewhere among the Honeysuckles, apparently. It is also made clear that there are lilacs around the porch; and there is evidence that while the Heroine is lost in the Underworld, she still seems to hear the bees humming around the door of her mother's home.

Did these bees sting her?

They should have.

And now, finally – does a story of the Underworld end happily?

Oh, always. The Sleuth tracks down the Master Criminal (himself a graduate of Oxford or Harvard) whose capacious brain has held all the tangled filaments of crime that kept the Underworld together. The Hero finds the Heroine just in time to save her from a fate worse than death (what it is, is not stated). The Old Crone turns out to be the mother of the Queena Gehenna, and the Queen is so affected that the shock knocks the henna out of her. She reforms, opens a Beauty Parlor, and there she is to this day.

## ✻ *Love Me, Love My Letters*

### THE USE OF INK FOR THE FIRST INKLINGS OF LOVE

THERE is a proverb which says a man is known by the company he keeps. There is a saying also that a man is best known by the song he sings. It is claimed, too, that people can always be distinguished by the books that they read, and by the pictures that they admire, and by the clothes that they wear.

All this may be true. But to my thinking, the truest test of character is found in the love letters that people write. Each different type of man or woman – including girls – has his, or her, perhaps their, own particular way of writing love letters.

As witness to which, let me submit to the reader's judgment a carefully selected set of love letters present and past. I need hardly say that the letters are not imaginary, but that each of them is an actual sample taken right out of the post office – no, I don't think I need to say it.

#### I

#### THE OLD-FASHIONED STYLE

Love letter of the year 1828 sent by messenger from Mr. Ardent Heartful, The Hall, Notts, England, to Miss Angela Blushanburn, The Shrubberies, Hops, Potts, Shrops, England, begging her acceptance of a fish:

"Respected Miss Angela:

"With the consent of your honored father and your esteemed mother, I venture to send to you by the messenger who bears

you this, a fish. It has, my respected Miss Angela, for some time been my most ardent desire that I might have the good fortune to present to you as the fruit of my own endeavours, a fish. It was this morning my good fortune to land while angling in the stream that traverses your property, with the consent of your father, a fish.

"In presenting for your consumption, with your parents' consent, respected Miss Angela, this fish, may I say that the fate of this fish which will thus have the inestimable privilege of languishing upon your table conveys nothing but envy to one who, while what he feels cannot be spoken, still feels as deeply as should feel, if it does feel, this fish.

"With the expression of a perfect esteem for your father and mother, believe me,

Your devoted,
"Ardent Heartful."

II

THE NEWER STYLE OF TO-DAY

Love letter composed by Professor Albertus Dignus, senior professor of English rhetoric and diction at the University, and famous as the most brilliant essayist outside of the staff of the *London Times*, to Miss Maisie Beatit of the chorus of the Follies-in-Transit company at Memphis, Tenn.:

"Cuckoo! my little peacherino, and how is she to-night? I wish she was right here, yum! yum! I got her tootsie weenie letter this morning. I hustled to the post office so fast to get it I nearly broke my slats. And so it really longs for me, does she? and did you really mean it? Well, you certainly look like a piece of chocolate to me! In fact, you're some bird! You're my baby all right," – and so forth for three pages. After which, the professor turns back to work on his essay – "The Deterioration of the English Language Among the Colored Races of Africa."

III

TRULY RURAL

Passionate Love Letter from Mr. Ephraim Cloverseed, Arcadia Post Office, Vermont, to Miss Nettie Singer, also of Arcadia, but at present on the cash in the Home Restaurant, 7860 Sixth Avenue, New York:

"Dear Nettie:

"There was a sharp frost last night which may do considerable harm to the fall wheat. Till last Tuesday there had not been

no frost that you wouldn't have noticed any. Some think we are in for a hard winter. Some think if it clears off a bit between this and New Year's it may not be but some don't. I seen a couple of crows in the pasture yesterday but you can't always bank on that. I've been troubled again with my toe. But my rheumatism seems a whole lot better from that last stuff. My left leg has been pretty stiff again but the liniment has done my right arm good. Well, I will now close,

"Ephraim."

IV

HYDRAULIC LOVE

Letter from Mr. Harry P. Smith, hydraulic engineer and surveyor, writing to Miss Georgia Sims, from Red Gulch Creek in the wilds of New Ontario. Everybody knows that Harry has been just crazy over Georgia for three years.

"Dear Georgia:

"We got in here through the bush yesterday and it certainly is a heck of a place to try to run a sight line in. The rock is mostly basaltic trap, but there are faults in it here and there that have been filled with alluvial deposit. It would be pretty hard to give you an estimate of the probable mineral content. But I should say you would have a fair chance of striking gas here if you went deep enough. But your overhead would be a whopper. Well, Georgia, I must now close.

"Harry."

THE ANSWERS THEY GOT

The answer received by Mr. Ardent Heartful, Anno Domini, 1828:

"Sir Joshua and Lady Blushanburn present their compliments to Mr. Ardent Heartful and desire to thank him for the fish which Mr. Heartful has had the kindness to forward to their daughter and which they have greatly enjoyed. Sir Joshua and Lady Blushanburn will be pleased if Mr. Heartful will present himself in person for such further conversation in regard to this fish as connects it with his future intentions."

WHAT THE PROFESSOR GOT

The answer from Miss Maisie Beatit of the Follies-in-Transit Company, Memphis, Tenn.:

"My dear Professor:

"It was with the most agreeable feelings of gratification that I received your letter this morning.

"The sentiments which you express and the very evident manifestation thus conveyed of your affection towards myself fill me, sir, with the most lively satisfaction. . . ." After which Maisie got tired of copying word after word of the Complete Letter-Writer and so she just added in her own style,

"Ain't you the Kidder? Our next jump is Kansas City.

"Maisie."

WOMANLY EPISTLE SENT FROM POSTAL STATION B-28, NEW YORK, TO ARCADIA, P.O., VERMONT

"Dear Ephraim:

"I was glad to get your letter. I was sorry to hear there has been so much frost. I was glad to hear there are still crows in the bush. I was sorry to hear your toe is no better. I was glad to hear your rheumatism is some better. I am glad your leg is nicely. I must now close.

"Nettie."

THE ANSWER FROM MISS GEORGIA SIMS, BLOOR STREET, TORONTO

She didn't answer.

. . . . .

Little query for the reader just at the end. Which of these various couples will get married first and stay married longest. Quite right. You guessed it immediately. There's no doubt about it, to persons of judgment in such things.

## ✻ *With the Authorities*

### SHOWING HOW EASILY THEY EXCEL AT THEIR OWN GAMES

#### I

#### A GAME OF BRIDGE WITH MR. HOYLE

THE SCENE is at Mr. Hoyle's house. Four people are at a card table. On a shelf nearby one can see the back of a book entitled "Hoyle's Bridge, Whist, and Card Games. New Edition, Revised and Enlarged."

ONE OF THE PLAYERS – Your turn to play, Mr. Hoyle.

MR. HOYLE – Oh! I beg your pardon. I'm afraid I was dreaming – my turn, yes, of course. What did you say was trumps?

MR. HOYLE'S PARTNER – Hearts.

MR. HOYLE – Oh, yes. Hearts, of course. How stupid of me! Now let me see. (*Mr. Hoyle begins murmuring, softly, to himself.*) – The ace was played a little while ago – I've got the King – the Queen must be——

THE OTHER LADY – Oh, Mr. Hoyle, you mustn't talk like that. You're telling everything. There is a rule against it.

MR. HOYLE – Oh! I'm so sorry, of course, yes, a rule, a rule – certainly – I'll just step over and look it up in my book to make sure——

THE OTHER MAN – Oh, don't bother, Hoyle. It's quite all right. Now go ahead and play, old man.

MR. HOYLE – Ah! It's *me* to play! I'm afraid I hadn't understood. Let – *me* – see – *me* to play – hum – *me* to play——

MR. HOYLE'S PARTNER – Yes, you to play. Don't you see – I led the ace of clubs and he's put on a spade——

MR. HOYLE – A *spade!* But, excuse me, why doesn't he play a *club?* I think there's a rule in my book – one minute——

MRS. HOYLE – Do sit down, William. Don't you remember he has no clubs.

MR. HOYLE – Ah! of course! no clubs, and so he can't play a club: quite right. In that case – let me think—— (*Mr. Hoyle sits and murmurs.*) Let me think. (*There is a long pause.*)

MR. HOYLE'S PARTNER (*Very gently*) – It's your turn, you know, Mr. Hoyle.

MR. HOYLE (*With animation*) – *My* turn, ah, yes, of course; I see, and my partner has led the ace of clubs – hearts are trumps. Aha! I have it. (*Mr. Hoyle puts the ace of trumps on the other ace.*) My trick, I think!

There is a general movement of consternation among the players.

THE OTHER THREE – Oh! Mr. Hoyle!

MR. HOYLE (*In surprise*) – Didn't I take it?

THE OTHER MAN – But don't you see when you trumped your partner's ace, you practically threw away a trick and——

MR. HOYLE'S PARTNER – Yes, and I'm afraid that exactly loses us the rubber, doesn't it?

THE OTHER MAN – Never mind, Hoyle, better luck next time. Let's start another game.

MR. HOYLE (*Rising from the table*) – Ah! no, I'm afraid I'd better stop now. I want to do some more work on my book this evening.

## II

### A LITTLE DINNER WITH MRS. BEATON

The Scene is in the Beatons' House in the sitting-room. The two Beatons are waiting for dinner. Mrs. Beaton is seated at a side-table very busy with a litter of printer's proofs. On the head of them one can read quite easily the title:

MRS. BEATON'S HOUSEHOLD COOKERY BOOK OF BRITISH, AMERICAN AND FOREIGN COOKING. NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION. *Specially recommended for the Household, for Hotels, Restaurants, Ships, Caravans, Picnics, etc., etc.*

Mr. Beaton sits in a weary but resigned attitude. His newspaper has fallen from his hands.

MRS. BEATON (*Looking up and gazing in front of her with a dreamy expression*) – Darling, how do you spell *Crème de Strasbourg*? Is it *ou* or just *u*?

MR. BEATON – *Ou*, I think, is the French.

MRS. BEATON – Aren't you a pet? (*There is another long silence while Mrs. Beaton works briskly at the papers. After a while she look up and says:*) Darling, which is a semicolon, the one with the little wiggle under it, or the one with just the two dots?

MR. BEATON – I think the semicolon is what you mean by the little wiggle.

MRS. BEATON – Well, listen, then, and do tell me which to use in this, because you're so clever – aren't you, pet? I'm talking about what-do-you-call-it – you know that long word that means when people do things in time——

MR. BEATON – Punctuality?

MRS. BEATON – Punctuality! aren't you *wonderful*! Well, I'm talking about punctuality. (*She reads from a proof.*) "In the care of the Household, it is most important that everything should be done at its proper time. Dinner must never be kept waiting. Nothing contributes so much to the happiness of the household as promptness and regularity in the service of meals." – Don't you think that is rather nicely said, Edward?

MR. BEATON – Very nice, I'm sure.

MRS. BEATON (*Continuing*) – "To be kept waiting for dinner." – Good gracious, what is that! (*There is a sound like a minor explosion from the kitchen with a great hissing of grease. Mrs. Beaton rises and disappears for a moment. When she re-*

*turns, she says quite tranquilly:*) It's all right. It was only Jane upset a lot of grease.

MR. BEATON – Grease!

MRS. BEATON – Grease or gravy, or something. She upset it on the cooking range.

MR. BEATON – Whew! It smells awful. What is it?

MRS. BEATON – Something she's making from a recipe, I think. I'm not just sure what it was going to be, soup, or a soufflé, something with an *S*, – I told her we'd eat anything with an *S* to-night, because I'm working on *S* at present. It does rather smell, doesn't it? Now let me see where I am – sago, sandwich, soufflé—— You won't mind dinner being a little late, my love!

MR. BEATON (*Mildly*) – But it's half an hour late already.

MRS. BEATON – Is it possible! You poor lamb. You must be famished. I can't think what Jane is doing. (*She rings a bell and Jane, very slovenly and much smeared, appears in the doorway.*) – Oh, Jane, don't bother with the soup. Perhaps you can give it to the cat. Mr. Beaton is in a hurry, so you might serve the roast at once.

JANE – Why, ma'am, there isn't any roast!

MRS. BEATON – No roast!

JANE – No, ma'am. You didn't order any.

MRS. BEATON (*Pleasantly*) – Ah, no, of course not, the letter *R*! – we finished it yesterday, didn't we, darling? How silly of me! And now, I remember, that thing with the *S* that fell into the fire, was the SPAGHETTI, of course, the SPAGHETTI——

MR. BEATON (*Hesitatingly*) – Don't you think then perhaps——

MRS. BEATON – That you'd better go and dine at the club? I'm afraid so, my pet. It's too bad. I'm afraid you've dined there every night for months, haven't you? And I *had* so counted on giving you a nice little home dinner as a surprise. And, oh! darling, one minute before you go – is *cuisine* spelt with a *q* – or——

MR. BEATON – With a *cu*, I think.

MRS. BEATON – With a *cu*! Aren't you a love! Don't be late, darling. Goodbye.

III

A MASTER MIND OF MEMORY

*The Little Home Scene That Ensues When He Loses His Little Chart*

The scene is laid in the living-room of the home of the family of Mr. Mastermind, the great memory expert, the inventor of the famous Mastermind Chart. The Master Mind, wearing an

overcoat and a hat, and evidently just ready to go out, is seen fussing about the room looking for something. Its Better Half is sitting in a rocking chair, knitting very placidly.

MR. MASTERMIND – Now where the deuce have I put the confounded thing?

MRS. MASTERMIND – What is it you're looking for, dear?

MR. MASTERMIND – My little what-d'ye-call-it.

MRS. MASTERMIND – What do you mean?

MR. MASTERMIND – Oh. you know – that little what's-its-name.

MRS. MASTERMIND – Oh, you mean your little square chart?

MR. MASTERMIND – Yes, of course, I couldn't think for the minute. My little square chart. The new edition. I can't find it.

MRS. MASTERMIND – Well, never mind it, dear. Go on out; I'll find it before you come in.

MR. MASTERMIND – No – but don't you see? – I want to take it with me. I meant to put it into my pocket to show it to – er – what-d'you-call-him.

MRS. MASTERMIND – To whom, dear?

MR. MASTERMIND – To that man I'm going to see, don't you know – down at the thing-ummey hotel.

MRS. MASTERMIND (*Still placidly knitting*) – I'm really afraid that I don't know what hotel you mean. You see, dear, you didn't say you were going out at all.

MR. MASTERMIND – Quite so. To tell the truth, I had forgotten – that is to say – I had made a new association of ideas with something, suggesting a still more powerful concatenation of thought.

MRS. MASTERMIND – Well, shall I name over all the hotels and then you can remember?

MR. MASTERMIND – No, no. Don't try to. You'd probably fail. You see, my dear, if you had ever taken a course in my memory system I wouldn't mind letting you try to name them, but as it is your sequence of ideas would break down. (*Still hunting desperately among the things on the table and turning over the books and papers in disorder.*) – Now, where the deuce is that little square chart? Where in Hades?

MRS. MASTERMIND – Please, dear, don't get excited.

MR. MASTERMIND – Excited! I'm not in the least excited! One of the main factors in the perfection of memory is that the mind must be quite calm, otherwise—— (*At this juncture Mr. Mastermind knocks over the little table.*) – Oh, damnation!

MRS. MASTERMIND – Please, dear, don't swear – (*Mrs. Mastermind starts to rise.*) – let me help you.

MR. MASTERMIND (*Making a great effort at control, and de-*

*sisting from his search so as to speak with calm*) – No, thank you, don't get up. I can find it. Meantime, as I say, I merely wanted it so as to bring it over to Mr. – Mr. – What's-his-name? – I don't recall it for the moment, but I can easily get it by setting up a perfectly simple chain of associations with the name itself. That kind of thing is really the essence of my system, and I do wish, dear, at some time when you are calmer, you'd start — under my guidance, of course — the first lessons of the method.

For example, I can easily recover this man's name – memory is never lost, my dear, merely buried – by connecting it with the fact that he was a fellow-passenger with us on board the – what the *deuce* was the name of that infernal steamer?

MRS. MASTERMIND – Which steamer, my love?

MR. MASTERMIND – Oh, you know, that cussed steamer that we were on when we came from – from – oh, from those blasted Islands!

MRS MASTERMIND (*Very gently*) – I'm afraid I don't remember it at all.

MR. MASTERMIND (*Beginning again his furious search*) – I mean those blasted islands that you go to when you, don't you know, when you've no time to go as far as the West – What-d'ye-call-'ems. People go there when they've got what's-its-name. The air is full of what-d'ye-call-it. (*Another little table is knocked over, and just at this moment there is heard a ring at the home door-bell.*)

MRS. MASTERMIND (*Calling from her chair so as to be heard in the hall*) – Jane, if you are anywhere there, would you please go to the door?

(*There is a slight pause. Jane can be seen going past the door of the living-room in the hall. The outer door is heard to open, and Jane reappears with a gentleman visitor in tow.*)

JANE (*Announcing*) – Mr. Smith.

MRS. MASTERMIND (*Rising from her chair*) – Oh, Mr. Smith! We're so glad to see you.

MR. MASTERMIND (*His face illuminated*) – Smith! Ah! ha! ha! Of course! Smith!

MR. SMITH (*Bowing over Mrs. Mastermind's hand*) – I thought I'd come across and call. I happen to be staying at the Royal Hotel.

MR. MASTERMIND (*Breaking out again*) – The Royal Hotel! Ha! Ha! of course! Yes! The *Royal* Hotel!

MR. SMITH (*Continuing*) – . . . and I don't think I've had the pleasure of seeing you since we were fellow-passengers on the *Queen Mary*!

MR. MASTERMIND – Yes! Yes! The *Queen Mary*. Of course! Q for Queen, and M for Mary!! Q and M being only three letters apart in a reverse direction. Ha!

MR. SMITH – But, of course, you left the Bahamas before I did.

MR. MASTERMIND – The Bahamas! the Bahamas!

(*Mr. Mastermind, now quite radiant, comes and shakes hands again and again with Mr. Smith, repeating "The Royal Hotel! The Queen Mary! The Bahamas!"*) – What a perfect sequence! what a proof of the system!

MR. SMITH to MR. MASTERMIND – I sent you over a note to ask if you wouldn't come over. But I gathered that you didn't receive it?

MR. MASTERMIND – Yes, yes, I got it. But I was delayed. I was so anxious to take along in my pocket a copy of my new little square chart, my last one, SUPER-MEMORY AS A SYSTEM, that it kept me late. To tell the truth, I couldn't find it. I was hunting it when you came in.

MR. SMITH – A little square chart?

MR. MASTERMIND – Yes, yes, just a little——

MR. SMITH – But surely, isn't *that* it? . . . not *that* pocket – the one sticking out of your inner pocket.

MR. MASTERMIND (*Drawing out the chart*) – Why, of course, how ridiculous. I see! I have put on the wrong coat underneath the one I meant to wear; by accident I put it in the money pocket. How extraordinary. A chain of association! But do let's sit down and talk over that fascinating voyage to the – the – the – Yokohama Islands.

## IV

### MR. HACKIT DECIDES TO SHAVE HIMSELF FOR SAFETY

The scene is laid in the principal bedroom in the residence of Mr. Hackit, inventor of the famous Autodoit Safety Razor. In one corner is a screen behind which can be heard at intervals the sound of running water. A lady, presumably Mrs. Hackit, is seated in a rocking-chair reading the morning paper. Mr. Hackit, as is at once apparent, is behind the screen.

MR. HACKIT'S VOICE – Rot blast it!

(*There is the sound of more rushing water; steam ascends above the screen. There is a clatter as of soap dishes, etc., falling around.*)

MR. HACKIT'S VOICE – Ding bust it!

MRS. HACKIT – Whatever is the matter, Alfred? Haven't you finished washing yet?

MR. HACKIT'S VOICE – Washing! I'm not wishing – I'm going to shave myself!

MRS. HACKIT (*In obvious alarm*) – To shave yourself! Oh! Alfred! For heaven's sake, be careful!

MR. HACKIT'S VOICE – Nonsense! There's not the slightest danger. With this new device of mine—— Wow!

MRS. HACKIT – What is it?

MR. HACKIT'S VOICE – I nearly cut my finger! How on earth do you fix in this confounded blade?

MRS. HACKIT – Why, surely, Alfred, you must remember that. You take hold of the blade (B) between the finger (F) and thumb (T) and slide it gently into the grooves (G) and (G) till it comes fast across the frame (F). Surely that's on all your directions?

MR. HACKIT'S VOICE (*Grudgingly*) – I suppose it is. Anyway, *I* can't do it.

(*There is a tinkling clatter as of a razor-blade and its fastenings falling to the floor.*) – Oh! drat the thing!

MRS. HACKIT – Wait a minute, Alfred, hand it to me over the top of the screen, and I'll go and get the paper of directions.

MR. HACKIT'S VOICE – No, no. I won't try any more.

(*There is a final splashing and gurgling of water, and then Mr. Hackit emerges from behind the screen. His face is covered with a luxuriant growth of beard and whiskers like those of a California Forty-niner. He says as he comes out:*)

After all, why should I bother to start now? I never shaved in my life. I was just curious to see how the thing works.

## V

### PREDICTING WITH A GREAT PREDICTOR

Mr. Talkleton, the great predictor of business conditions, is seen in his inner office. Mr. Talkleton is known far and wide as the statistician who calculated the Japanese Chow crop of 1928 to within a bushel and who predicted the crisis of 1921 less than six months after it happened. He is seated at his desk. A litter of papers covered with figures lies all about him. The great man is absolutely absorbed in his work. His massive brain is motionless, poised over his task.

Near him at another desk is his stenographer with a telephone.

The telephone rings.

THE STENOGRAPHER (*Speaking into the telephone*) – I'm so sorry you can't speak to Mr. Talkleton this morning. He is making a forecast. (*She rings off.*)

MR TALKLETON (*Without moving his head*) – How much is 6 times 7?

THE STENOGRAPHER – I'll look it up. (*She takes down an encyclopedia and searches in it. Then she says:*) Forty-eight.

MR. TALKLETON – Thank you.

(*There is silence for a little time.*)

MR. TALKLETON (*Without moving his head*) – How much is 8 and 17 and 4?

THE STENOGRAPHER – 8 and 17 and 4? I'll just work it out for you, Mr. Talkerton.

MR. TALKLETON – Thank you.

(*The stenographer moves across to an adding machine and pounds at it furiously for two or three minutes. Then she draws a paper slip out of it and reads:*) One hundred.

MR. TALKERTON (*As before*) – Thank you.

(*The telephone rings again.*)

THE STENOGRAPHER – I'm sorry. Mr. Talkleton is busy. You want a forecast? Oh, yes, I'll ask him. (*She puts hand over the phone.*) Mr. Talkleton, there is a lady wants a forecast on the peach crop for 1929. Shall I say yes?

MR. TALKLETON – Yes. Tell her we'll have it today and get the office boy to predict it. Give him money to buy a couple of peaches to predict it with. Don't disturb me again.

THE STENOGRAPHER – Yes, Madame, we will make it for you today. Will you send a taxi and get it? Thank you.

(*She rings off. There is another little silence.*)

MR. TALKLETON – Add me up 4 and 6 and 3 and then subtract 3.

(*There is a terrific clattering of the adding machine. The stenographer draws out the slip and announces:*) Six plus four. . . . (*Presently she says:*) – What are you working on this morning, Mr. Talkleton?

MR. TALKLETON – It is a forecast of general business conditions for one year, and now will you kindly supply me with a few necessary data? The calculation is practically complete and I need only a few data which I find difficult to remember. How many ounces are there in a pound avoirdupois?

THE STENOGRAPHER – Twenty.

MR. TALKLETON – Thank you. I never can remember it. And how many inches in a foot?

THE STENOGRAPHER – I've got that somewhere in our files, Mr. Talkleton. I'll look it up later.

MR. TALKLETON – Thank you – and let me have at the same time the number of gallons in a firkin, and the number of

perches in a furlong. And now I think I'm ready. Will you take this dictation, please?

"I calculate from the data gathered from various indexes and reduced to a common basis that the general trend of business for the year will be upward and downward. There is every indication of a sharp decline in the percentage of the fall of values upwards. But there may be a sharp jolt sideways. In fact, the entire year 1927——"

THE STENOGRAPHER – Which year, Mr. Talkleton?

MR. TALKLETON – 1927.

THE STENOGRAPHER – Surely not 1927?

MR. TACKLETON– That's the year I'm predicting on.

THE STENOGRAPHER – Why, Mr. Talkleton, 1927 is over – months ago.

MR. TALKERTON (*In alarm*) – All over! I never noticed it. When did it end?

THE STENOGRAPHER – Last December.

MR. TALKLETON (*In despair*) — Last December! And I've spent months and months on it!

THE STENOGRAPHER – Oh, never mind, Mr. Talkleton. Call it 1928 – and I am certain it will be just as good as any other of your predictions.

MR. TALKLETON (*Brightly and with renewed animation*) – Will it? That's fine. All right! Type it out while I get my hat and coat, and then fetch me my arithmetic primer, and the multiplication table, and we'll go out to lunch.

## ✻ *Literature and the Eighteenth Amendment*

I AM privileged to make a unique announcement on behalf of the Mayor and Council of my place of residence, the City of Montreal. To be more exact, let me add that this announcement has not yet been sanctioned by the Mayor and Council, but I feel certain that as soon as they hear of it, they will be all for it.

It concerns, in a word, a proposal to extend to United States authors and playwrights an invitation to use the peculiar facilities enjoyed by the City of Montreal for the laying of plots, scenes, etc., and for the domicile of literary characters. Put quite simply, this new plan will restore to the American author the literary setting lost under the Eighteenth Amendment.

. . . . .

Ever since the Eighteenth Amendment was appended to the Constitution of the United States, writers of fiction, poetry, and the drama have found themselves under a handicap. In the stories of to-day they are unable to give their characters a drink. At first sight this seems nothing. But when we realize how much of our literature both in America and in England for centuries past has depended, rightly or wrongly, for conviviality on the drinking of toasts and healths, on wassail and on Xmas, on stirrup cups and Auld Lang Synes – we can see how hard it is, in literature, to do without it.

Let me illustrate:

I met casually the other day in New York a writer whom I knew to have been, only a few years ago, one of the most successful writers of fiction of our day. He looked despondent. And I was pained to notice that his clothes were ill kept and his appearance seedy.

"You look down on your luck, old man," I said.

"I am," he answered.

"Come along, then," I said, "and have a chocolate ice-cream sundae to pick you up."

A few minutes later we were standing beside the counter of a drug store with a smoking chocolate ice-cream sundae in our hands.

"That's better," said my friend, as he drained his sundae at one draught.

"Have another," I suggested, "and then tell me of your troubles."

Warmed and invigorated by the ice-cream, to which was presently added, on my proposal, a pint of buttermilk, my friend proceeded to explain.

"I can't get used to this new situation," he said. "You see all my stories are novels of to-day, with the plot laid in the present time – you understand?"

"Perfectly," I said, "have some more buttermilk."

"Thank you. Well, the trouble is, I can't get used to the present situation at all. For instance, in my last novel (you haven't seen it for the simple reason that I can't sell it) I bring in a dinner party. In fact, I nearly always bring in a dinner party. It makes such a good setting, don't you know."

"Quite so," I answered. "What about a quart of sour milk?"

"No, thanks," he said, "not now, I want to keep my head clear. Well, I always used, as I say, to have descriptions of dinner parties, in which there were tables smothered with flowers, and glittering glass, and at which – let me see——"

Here he paused and pulled out some scraps of paper, evidently literary notes, from his pocket.

"Yes, at which, for example, 'Meadows (that was always the butler) noiselessly passed the champagne'; in which 'The conviviality of the party had now reached its height. Lord Dangerdog pledged his beautiful vis-à-vis in a brimming glass of champagne'; and in which 'Lady Angela and the Duchess exchanged smiles over their claret'; and in which finally 'the host instructed Meadows to bring up some of the port, the old port, from the dusty bin in the cellar where it had been first laid down by Winthrop Washington Beverly Robinson, his ancestor, in the year of the Declaration of Independence; a "noble port," said Lord Dangerdog as he sipped the tawny wine with the air of a connoisseur. . . .'

"How's that?" said my friend, breaking off in his reading.

"Excellent," I answered, "and it is amazing how really dependent our literature used to be for its mirth and happiness on just that kind of thing."

"Precisely," he answered, "that is what I am finding. I can't replace it. Here's what I put into my new story (the one that I can't sell) for the dinner party scene:

" 'As the pea soup circulated freely, a new animation seemed to come to the guests. Lord Dangerdog, already at his second plateful, smiled across at Lady Angela . . . while the young girl herself hid her blushing face in her soup to avoid the boldness of his eye.

" ' "Come," said the host, turning to his English guest, "let me pledge you in another stick of celery," and, suiting the action of the word, he held aloft a magnificent bunch of Kalamazoo celery, and with the words, "Let us eat to our English visitor," he devoured the entire bunch in a single mouthful.

" 'Then beckoning to the noiseless butler to whom he passed at the same time the key of the cellar, "Meadows," he said, "fetch me up some of the *old* soup: it's in the fourth trough on the left." ' "

. . . . .

"There!" said my friend as he finished reading. "What do you think of it?"

"You're quite right," I said. "It hardly seems the same."

. . . . .

Since then I have been looking more closely into this question of conviviality and literature. I find that drink of some kind is associated not only with scenes of gaiety, but with almost

every aspect of literature. Take the familiar literary theme of the gradual ruin and downfall of a young man, happily married, and with all life before him.

In the stories of yesterday we used to read, for example:

. . . . . .

"It was with a devastating sense of despair that Agatha watched her husband go to the sideboard and with a shaking hand pour himself out a glass of neat brandy, which he drained at a gulp . . ." etc., etc.

In an up-to-date story all that we can say is something of this sort:

"It was with a devastating sense of despair that Agatha realized that her husband was becoming addicted to consommé. She watched him as he surreptitiously drank a second ladleful of it, and asked herself what would happen if he took a tureenful."

. . . . . .

There is only one thing to be done. Move the stories and scenes up to the city of Montreal, where the old and familiar literary background still survives, where Xmas is Xmas, and a Party is a Party and not a Stuffing Match.

. . . . . .

Let any writer of one-act plays in the United States consider, for instance, the brightness of such an opening as this:

Scene: The Bar of a Montreal hotel. There are present Lord Dangerdog, Lady Evelina, The Bishop of Labrador, General the Hon. Sir Evelyn Everhard.

THE BISHOP (*Wiping his face*) – What an excellent cocktail.

THE GENERAL – Is it not, and so mild! It's only American rum and absinthe, I believe.

LADY EVELINA (*Putting down twenty-five cents*) – Mix the boys up another of those.

. . . . . .

When Montreal offers a chance for a scene like this, what a shame to lay a plot in Indianapolis.

. . . . . .

Now I am entitled, in fact, I am invited, by a hotel in Montreal to say that any American dramatists visiting it are entirely welcome to lay one-act plays in the bar-room. Another hotel also announces that authors may lay one-act plays in the bar or in the grill room and serve liquor to their characters at any time up to midnight.

. . . . . .

And if any author has occasion to entertain his characters in a club – a *real* club, such, I have been told, as no longer exists in the United States – I invite him, as a personal matter, to put them into the University Club, Montreal, where they will find everything needed for the best class of fiction.

They will then be able to reinsert into their stories such little lost touches as:

"It was the habit of Sir John to drop into his club for a glass of sherry and bitters before driving home to dinner."

There is so much more *class* in that than in saying that he generally stopped at a soda fountain for a pint of chocolate

. . . . .

squash.

If the plan that I have outlined is carried through, the first train-load of American authors will probably be shipped in within a month. Scene-laying will begin at once. And next season's crop of novels will begin:

"The sun was slowly setting on both sides of the St. Lawrence, illuminating with its dying beams the windows of the hotels and clubs of Montreal, in one of which, licensed to sell wine and beer up till midnight, a man and a woman——"

And the story is off to a good start and literature comes into its own again.

## ✻ *The Hunt for a Heroine*

### HOW THE FICTION WRITER STRUGGLES TO MAKE AN ATTRACTIVE WOMAN

By a silly kind of convention, handed down from our great-grandfathers' time, every work of fiction has to have in it the class of person known as a Heroine.

These heroines were found everywhere. You found them in stories of adventure, mixed up with pirates and heroic lieutenants in the navy, in stories of English country life where they lived in rectories or worked as governesses, or in historic and romantic novels where they rode on "palfreys" and had "varlets" to wait on them.

Nor was there any great trouble, in the literary sense, in creating them. The author merely described what he thought an

attractive girl and let it go at that. He suited himself. Some writers, for example, liked them small; they preferred to make their heroine what they called a "sylph," which meant a being so dainty and so frail that she could just about get around by herself and no more. This little "wee-wee" heroine used to "stamp her little foot imperiously" and "toss her little head disdainfully," – in fact she had quite a lot of tricks like that and made a terrible hit.

But other writers liked the heroine to be what they called "divinely tall," and "willowy." She would just nicely get under a doorway, and was as thin and bendable as a stethoscope. But the idea was that if she ever "twined her arms about her lover," – as she did on the last page of the book – it was a pretty high-class piece of twining.

But in those days the thing was simple. The circulation of books was limited. There was none of the world-wide appeal of to-day. Nowadays the author has to try to please, not some of the people, but all of the people. He has got to make a heroine to suit not merely his own taste but everybody's. Otherwise there will be a lot of people who can't read the story because they don't like the heroine.

The result is that in the romances of to-day the heroine must not belong to any one type but to all of them at once. In a subtle way the writer must suggest to every reader the girl of his particular preference. This is very hard to do. Some writers can't do it at all. But when it is really well done the resulting description of the up-to-date heroine sounds something such as the following pen portrait, taken, almost word for word, from one of the most popular novels of the year:

"Margaret Overproof was neither short nor tall. Her perfect figure, slender and at the same time fat, conveyed at times an impression of commanding height while at other times she looked sawed off. Her complexion, which was of the tint of a beautiful dull marble like the surface of a second-hand billiard ball, was shot at times with streaks of red and purple which almost suggested apoplexy. Her nose which was clear-cut and aquiline was at the same time daintily turned up at the end and then moved off sideways. A critic might have considered her mouth a trifle too wide and her lips a trifle too full, but on the other hand a horse buyer would have considered them all right. Her eyes were deep and mournful and lit with continuous merriment. Her graceful neck sloped away in all directions till it reached her bust, which stopped it."

. . . . .

There! a reader who is not satisfied with Margaret would be pretty hard to please. But, by the way, her name ought not to be anything so simple as Margaret, if she is to be a heroine of to-day. In earlier times, say, a hundred years ago, the heroines were called by flowing classical names such as Dulcinea, Althusia, or Ambrosia. Then they went through a stage of being called by the simple old home names such as Margaret and Catherine and Mary Ann. They then passed through a period of cat-like nicknames, such as "Puss," and "Dot," "Kit," and "Vi."

But nowadays the favorite name for a heroine seems to be one of those dignified, double-gendered, half impossible designations that might mean either a girl or a man or a horse, – as, for example, Joyce, Loïs, Dyce, or something of that sort.

. . . . . .

Having got her described and named the next difficulty with the heroine is to dress her. This is the hardest of all. The novelist of two generations ago did it very simply. They always clothed their heroine in "old clinging stuff." That was all. What it is or where you buy it, I don't know. But the old-fashioned heroine always wore it on great occasions. If she was poor, – a governess, for instance, – she got it out of a box left her by her mother. If she was rich she went out and bought it and it was then called "priceless old clinging stuff." And she made her appearance in it thus:

"As Margaret dsecended the broad stairways, dressed simply in beautiful old white clinging stuff which clung to her as she descended, all eyes turned to gaze at her in enraptured admiration. 'Great Heavens,' said the young Duke, 'who is she?' "

. . . . . .

But that won't do now. These are the days of illustrated fashion magazines and the readers, the female readers at any rate, want to know what it was that she really had on, and won't be put off any longer with that clinging stuff. Nor will it do to say that she was "dressed all in flaming red," or that "she appeared dressed in opalescent pink, shot with blue," or "half shot with something concealed below." Even if her appearance was half shot, the reader wants to know all about it and where she got it.

Only women writers can really deal with this situation, and unfortunately, nine out of ten novels are written by men. All that a man can do is to reach out for a fashion magazine, snatch out a handful of technical terms and throw them at the heroine, – thus:

"As Loïs gayly slid down the bannisters of the staircase, her appearance attracted all eyes. She wore a dainty georgette of limousine tucked over a brassière of deep blue and held in place with a ceinture of alligator hide with crystalline insertions. 'Great Heavens,' said the young Duke, 'who is she?' "

. . . . . .

With that, her figure and her name and her dress are fairly well settled. But worse remains, – her mind? What is, what ought to be, the mind of an attractive woman? Should she know anything or just nothing?

The earlier writers were all for the nothing. With them the less the heroine knew the bigger hit she made. Witness this description taken right out of an old book, but easily recognizable.

"Caroline Cowslip had been brought up in the greatest simplicity. Reared in the seclusion of an old-fashioned rectory it was probable that she was more simple than any girl within a radius of ten miles. To this charm of a native simplicity was added a total lack of education and an entire absence of worldly knowledge. The father, the good old rector, had at last gone to his rest, leaving Caroline alone in the world."

In these older books, the idea was that this kind of start would land Caroline in all kinds of interesting trouble.

But to-day this, too, is changed. The heroine can't any longer be made ignorant because this gives offense to all women readers: on the other hand, it doesn't do to have her know too much, or else the men object to her. The only way to get round it is for the author to keep on declaring that Loïs has a "limpid mind," and to speak of "the girl's clear intelligence" but not to let her work it too hard.

Here is something of the touch that is needed.

. . . . . .

"Loïs sat silent, her hands clasped about her knee and her eyes half closed, while Dangerfield explained to her all the intricacies of the situation.

" 'I begin to see,' she murmured.

"Dangerfield, relying always on the limpid intelligence of the girl's limpid intellect, continued in the same quiet way to lay before her all the tangled factors in the weg of calculation which made up – what he was talking about.

"At the end he stopped – 'And you can trust me?' he asked. 'Yes,' she murmured as she rose, 'and now I must go home and *think*!' "

. . . . . .

By that means, of course, she has it pretty well put all over Dangerfield and the reader too. In reality she is probably just about on the same level as Caroline. But when she says she must "go home and *think*," let her go by all means. It is what she needs.

## ✻ *Bed-time Stories for Grown-up People*

### WITH APOLOGIES TO OUR BEST CHILDREN'S WRITERS

THERE has come into being lately a new and very charming school of literature which deals with the animals, not as they are but as they might be. Skinko the Skunk turns into a merry little companion, a little saucy at times but without malice. Warto the Toad sits complacently under a broad leaf, talking with Squirmo the Worm. Old Mr. Hawk hovers gently overhead looking kindly down and wondering whom to eat. The whole animal kingdom is thus suffused with such a soft and drowsy atmosphere that the little children lay their tired heads on the pillow and go to sleep dreaming of it.

Isn't it beautiful? And what a pity it seems that we can't do the same for grown-up life. The only part of our modern newspaper that breathes out this entrancing atmosphere of universal happiness is that little corner of the children's page. All the rest of it is filled with battles and crimes, with murder and sudden death.

. . . . .

Come, let us see if we can't do something to straighten this out. Let us take a piece of news out of a modern journal, the first to hand and the first random item we see, and try if we cannot rewrite it with the human breadth of kindliness of a bed-time story. Here, what is this? This looks like the kind of thing that we want:

DARING BURGLARY IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
DESPERATE CRIMINAL DANGEROUSLY WOUNDED

Friday, April 1.—Last night at an advanced hour burglars broke into the cellars of the residence of Mr. Surplus Overall, the well-known stockbroker, and were in the act of ransacking

the house when a sudden alarm brought the police to the scene. After a fusillade of shots had been exchanged the burglars made good their escape with the exception of one man who was desperately wounded in the fray and captured. The apparent motive was robbery.

. . . . . .

But, dear me! that sounds altogether too harsh, too brutal! It is a criminal world indeed in which such things as that can happen. Let us see if we can rewrite it, so as to give it that soft and gentle touch of the bed-time story.

Try it like this:

. . . . . .

Away down in the crowded part of the city lives Fuzzy the Burglar in a hole of his own that nobody else can find. He has an old fur coat with the fur nearly all eaten off of it and so he is called Fuzzy. He looks very different from Fatto the Capitalist whose sleek fur coat glistens and ripples as he walks, and very different from Stocko the Broker who is all covered with rich fur and silk lining from his neck to his feet and his paws.

But Fuzzy hardly ever sees these because he doesn't get out by day but lies round in his hole and sleeps and only goes out at night. Fuzzy sees better at night. Sometimes he wanders at night away up into the part of the town where Fatto and Stocko live and where there are so many trees that it is like a wood. Often as he goes past their houses, Fuzzy's quick nose catches delicious smells wafted from the kitchens and he knows that Fatto or Stocko is having a feast, with nuts and elderberry wine. My! how Fuzzy would like to be in that feast! Only of course he can't be in it because Fatto and Stocko won't let him come in.

In fact, in order to keep Fuzzy out they have Coppo the Cop walking up and down in the street outside, under the electric light, just to keep Fuzzy away.

Coppo likes to walk under the light because then everybody can see him and see what a sleek coat he has and how plump he is. Now and again Coppo will stand still and swing his arms so as to beat himself with his big paws: partly because it is cold and partly because his instinct tells him that that is good for his circulation. If Coppo didn't beat his arms like this perhaps he wouldn't have any circulation at all.

. . . . . .

Now when Coppo stands on his beat he sees all the people that live along his street come home in their limousine cars, and of course he knows them all. And when he sees Stocko the Broker go by, he says to himself, "There's Stocko coming home";

and he puts his paw up to his hat to show that he knows him. Then presently he sees Skin the Lawyer, and Scratchy the Notary drive home and at last he sees Clubbo, the Club man, come crawling home along the edge of the sidewalk, because it is Clubbo's instinct not to trust the sidewalk in case it should rise up and hit him. And at last Coppo says, "They are all home." And he goes and stands under the lamp and leans against the lamp post because he knows that that is good for his back. And he wishes that he was at home too. Away down in the deeper part of the city Coppo has a mate and a lot of little Coppos all round and plump like himself. But of course he can't be at home with them because he has to stay under the lamp post and then if anything has happened he can run off as fast as he can on his fat legs to the Station House and say, "Something has happened!"

. . . . .

But all the time while Coppo is standing there he is really watching for Fuzzy the Burglar. And he says to himself, "I wonder where Fuzzy is to-night," and, "I wonder what Fuzzy is doing?" He looks up and down the street and towards all the dark corners and thinks "perhaps Fuzzy is in there."

So presently, on the night we are going to talk about, Fuzzy came along the street, only he didn't come along openly and heartily, like Fatto the Capitalist and Stocko the Broker. He came sneaking along and sneaking along and when he saw Coppo looking he stood quite still in the shadow and growled to himself and showed his teeth with all the fur on his old coat standing up with apprehension.

And presently when Coppo was looking the wrong way Fuzzy got right past him and into the little dark lane beside Stocko's house. There he waited a little while to see that all was still and then he knelt down in the darkness beside one of the cellar windows and began scratching at it with his clever little paws till presently the windows pushed open and Fuzzy slipped quietly down into the cellar.

My! But it was dark down there! At first Fuzzy could hardly see anything at all but presently when his eyes began to get used to it he saw that he was in a room with a lot of coal in it. Fuzzy's instinct told him that this must be the coal room with the coal for the furnace that keeps Stocko warm while he is eating nuts and drinking elderberry wine. Fuzzy knew that there must be a door somewhere and a flight of stairs to lead up into the house. So he crawled round quietly until he found the stairs and then he waited and waited and he pricked up his ears and

he listened and listened, because he wanted to find out whether Stocko was asleep. If he was, then perhaps he might have left his big gold watch somewhere on a table, or perhaps he had left ten dollars on a chair, or perhaps his long slick fur coat was hanging in the hall.

Fuzzy thought of all these things as he sat there in the dark and he licked his chops when he pictured himself going home to his hole in the fur coat, with ten dollars in the pockets and the big gold watch and chain round his neck.

Only Fuzzy couldn't be *quite* sure that Stocko was asleep! Sometimes he thought he heard him snoring and then he thought perhaps he heard him still moving about. So he waited and waited.

But Stocko wasn't asleep. He was upstairs sitting in his dressing gown at his library table counting his money. He was counting it because he wasn't quite sure whether he had made ten thousand dollars that day or ten thousand dollars and fifty cents; and he was sitting up to see which it was.

. . . . . .

So at last Fuzzy made up his mind to crawl on up the stairs. In one hand he had a little wee light that he could shut on and off, and in his breast pocket was a cute little automatic pistol.

. . . . . .

Fuzzy climbed higher and higher: and then just as he got near the top of the cellar stairs, he knocked against a lump of coal lying on the steps and away it went bump! bump! bump! all down the steps. And just at that minute Fuzzy heard a sharp wow! wow! wow! and he knew that dear little Helpup, Stocko's fox terrier, had heard the noise and was trying to wake the house. Fuzzy would like to have taken his automatic pistol and made a hole through dear little Helpup from one end of him to the other. But he didn't dare do it and so he turned and rushed down the stairs again and seemed to fall over everything and shouted, "Who's there!" And somewhere in another set of rooms of the basement Booze the Butler woke up and began putting on his evening tie again and bells rang and the maids screamed and Fuzzy ran up and down among the coals trying to find the friendly window and he couldn't.

Then Stocko put his head out of the window and shouted out to Coppo, "Hi, there! thieves! robbers!!" and Coppo who had hardly been asleep at all called out, "All right, sir," and drew his big revolver and began firing it in all directions and hitting the houses and the trees and shooting at the people who put their heads out of windows.

And in less than no time other Coppos came running along, and then wagonfuls of them arrived with gongs and bells. And when poor Fuzzy came crawling out of the cellar window they all fired their guns at him as often as they could shoot, and one of them actually almost hit him in the foot and at any rate tore the heel of his old boot off.

. . . . .

So when the Cops at last got Fuzzy and put him in a wagon like a cage and sat in it with him, Fuzzy was quite sulky. At first he wouldn't talk at all but all the Cops just laughed and one of them gave Fuzzy a drink of huckleberry tea that he had in a flask (because all Cops like huckleberry tea). So Fuzzy cheered up presently and when the Cops told him he would get two years in the Jug he didn't mind so very much but he only laughed. Because the Cops really like Fuzzy and Fuzzy likes the Cops and they both think one another real men.

Only Fuzzy made up his mind that after this he would never, never speak to Helpup again.

## ✻ *Softening the Stories for the Children*

### BUT DON'T DO IT: THEY PREFER THEM ROUGH

"WHAT IS the story that you are reading, Peggy?" I asked of a wide-eyed child of eight, who sat buried in a story book.

"Little Red Riding Hood," she answered.

"Have you come to the part," I asked, "where the grandmother gets eaten?"

"She didn't get eaten!" the child protested in surprise.

"Yes, – the wolf comes to her cottage and knocks at the door and she thinks that it is Little Red Riding Hood and opens the door and the wolf eats her."

She shook her head.

"That's not it at all in this book," she said.

So I took a look at the page before her and I read:

"Then the wolf pushed open the door of the cottage and rushed in but the grandmother was not there as she happened not to be at home."

Exactly! The grandmother, being a truly up-to-date grandmother, was probably out on the golf links, or playing bridge with a few other grandmothers like herself.

At any rate she was not there and so she escaped getting eaten by the wolf. In other words, Little Red Riding Hood, like all the good old stories that have come down from the bad old times, is having to give way to the tendencies of a human age. It is supposed to be too horrible for the children to read. The awful fate of the grandmother, chawed up by the wolf, or, no, swallowed *whole* like a Malpecque oyster, is too terrible for them to hear. So the story, like a hundred other stories and pictures, has got to be censored, reëdited, and incidentally, spoiled.

All of which rests on a fundamental error as to literature and as to children. There is no need to soften down a story for them. They like it rough.

"In the real story," I said to the little girl, "the grandmother was at home, and the wolf rushed in and ate her in one mouthful!"

"Oh! that's *much* better!" she exclaimed.

"And then, afterwards, when the hunters came in, they killed the wolf and cut his stomach open and the grandmother jumped out and was saved!"

"Oh, isn't that splendid!" cried the child.

In other words, all the terror that grown-up people see in this sort of story is there for grown-up people only. The children look clean over it, or past it, or under it. In reality, the vision of the grandmother feebly defending herself against the savage beast, or perhaps leaping round the room to get away from him, and jumping on top of the grandfather's clock – is either horrible, or weird, or pathetic, or even comic, as we may happen to see it. But to the children it is just a story – and a good one – that's all.

And all the old stories are the same! Consider Jack the Giant-Killer. What a conglomeration of weeping and wailing, of people shut into low dungeons, of murder, of sudden death, of blood, and of horror! Jack, having inveigled an enormous giant into eating an enormous quantity of porridge, then rips him up the stomach with a huge sword! What a mess!

But it doesn't disturb Jack or his young readers one iota. In fact, Jack is off at once with his young readers trailing eagerly after him, in order to cut off at one blow the three huge heads of a three-headed giant and make a worse mess still.

From the fairy stories and the giant stories the children presently pass on – quite unscathed as I see it – to the higher

range of the blood-and-thunder stories of the pirates and the battles. Here again the reality, for the grown-up mind that can see it, is terrible and gruesome; but never so for the boys and girls who see in it only the pleasant adventure and bright diversity.

Take, for instance, this familiar scene as it appears and reappears in the history of Jack Daredevil, or Ned Fearnothing, or any of those noble boys who go to tea, in books, at the age of fourteen and retire, as admirals, at twenty-two.

"The fire from both ships was now becoming warm. A round shot tearing across the deck swept off four of our fellows. 'Ha! ha!' said Jack, as he turned towards Ned on the quarterdeck, 'this bids fair to become lively.' "

It certainly did. In fact, it would be lively already if one stopped to think of the literal and anatomical meaning of a round shot – twenty-five pounds of red-hot iron – tearing through the vitals of four men. But the boy reader never gets it this way. What is said is, that four of our fellows were "swept off" – just that; merely "swept off" and that's the way the child reader takes it. And when the pirates "leap on deck," Jack himself "cuts down" four of them and Ned "cuts down" three. That's all they do – "they cut they down"; they just "shorten them" so to speak.

Very similar in scope and method was the good old "half-dime novel," written of the days of the "Prairie," and the mountain trail, the Feathered Indian and the Leathered Scout. In these, unsuspecting strangers got scalped in what is now the main street of Denver – where they get skinned.

These stories used to open with a rush and kept in rapid oscillation all the time. In fact they began with the concussion of firearms.

" 'Bang! Bang! Bang!' Three shots rang out over the prairie and three feathered Indians bit the dust."

It seemed always to be a favorite pastime of the Indians – "biting dust."

In grim reality, to the grown-up mind, these were stories of terror – of midnight attack, of stealthy murder with a knife from without the folds of the tent, of sudden death in dark caverns, of pitiless enemies, and of cruel torture.

But not so to the youthful mind. He followed it all through quite gayly, sharing the high courage of his hero, Dick Danger the Dauntless. "I must say," whispered Dick to Ned (this was when the Indians had them tied to a tree and were piling grass and sticks round it so as to burn them alive), "I must say, old

man, things begin to look critical. Unless we can think of some way out of this fix, we are lost."

Notice, please, this word "lost": in reality they would be worse than lost. They'd be *cooked.* But in this class of literature the word "lost" is used to cover up a multitude of things. And, of course, Dick does think of a way out. It occurs to him that by moving his hands he can slip off the thongs that bind him, set Ned free, leap from the tree to the back of a horse, of two horses, and then by jumping over the edge of a chasm into the forest a thousand feet below, they can find themselves in what is called "comparative safety." After which the story goes calmly on, oblivious of the horrible scene that nearly brought it to an end.

But as the modern parent and the modern teacher have grown alarmed, the art of story-telling for children has got to be softened down. There must be no more horror and blood and violent death. Away with the giants and the ogres! Let us have instead the stories of the animal kingdom in which Wee-Wee the Mouse has tea on a broad leaf with Goo-goo the Caterpillar, and in which Fuzzy the Skunk gives talks on animal life that would do for Zoölogy Class I at Harvard.

But do we – do they – can we escape after all from the cruel environment that makes up the life in which we live? Are the animals after all so much softer than the ogres, so much kinder than the pirates? When Slick the Cat crackles up the bones of Wee-Wee the Mouse, how does that stand! And when old Mr. Hawk hovers in the air watching for Cheep-cheep the chicken who tries in vain to hide under the grass, and calls for its lost mother – how is that for terror! To my thinking the timorous and imaginative child can get more real terror from the pictured anguish of a hunted animal than from the deaths of all the Welsh giants that ever lived on Plynlimmon.

The tears of childhood fall fast and easily, and evil be to him who makes them flow.

How easily a child will cry over the story of a little boy lost, how easily at the tale of poverty and want, how inconsolably at death. Touch but ever so lightly these real springs of anguish and the ready tears will come. But at Red Riding Hood's grandmother! Never! She didn't *die*! She was merely *eaten.* And the sailors, and the pirates, and the Apache Indians! They don't *die,* not in any real sense to the child. They are merely "swept off," and "mowed down" – in fact, scattered like the pieces on an upset chessboard.

The moral of all which is, don't worry about the apparent

terror and bloodshed in the children's books, the real children's books. There is none there. It only represents the way in which little children, from generation to generation, learn in ways as painless as can be followed, the stern environment of life and death.

## ✻ *The Great Detective*

*" 'Ha!' exclaimed the Great Detective, raising himself from the resilient sod on which he had lain prone for half an hour, 'what have we here?'*

*"As he spoke, he held up a blade of grass he had plucked.*

*" 'I see nothing,' said the Poor Nut.*

*" 'No, I suppose not,' said the Great Detective; after which he seated himself on a stone, took out his saxophone from its case, and for the next half hour was lost in the intricacies of Gounod's 'Sonata in Six Flats with a Basement.' "*

*– Any Detective Story.*

. . . . .

The publishers tell us that more than a thousand detective stories are sold every day – or is it every hour? It does not matter. The point is that a great many are sold all the time, and that there is no slackening of the appetite of the reading public for stories of mysterious crime.

It is not so much the crime itself that attracts as the unraveling of the mystery by the super-brain of the Great Detective, as silent as he is efficient. He speaks only about once a week. He seldom eats. He crawls around in the grass picking up clews. He sits upside down in his arm-chair forging his inexorable chain of logic.

But when he's done with it, the insoluble mystery is solved, justice is done, the stolen jewels are restored, and the criminal is either hanged or pledges his word to go and settle on a ranch in Saskatchewan; after which the Great Detective takes a night off at the Grand Opera, the only thing that really reaches him.

The tempting point about a detective story – both for the writer and the reader – is that it is so beautifully easy to begin. All that is needed is to start off with a first-class murder.

*"Mr. Blankety Blank sat in his office in the drowsy hour of a Saturday afternoon. He was alone. Work was done for the day. The clerks were gone. The building, save for the janitor, who lived in the basement, was empty.*

*"As he sat thus, gazing in a sort of reverie at the papers on the desk in front of him, his chin resting on his hand, his eyes closed and slumber stole upon him."*

Quite so. Let him feel just as drowsy as ever he likes. The experienced reader knows that now is the very moment when he is about to get a crack on the nut. This drowsy gentleman, on the first page of the detective story, is not really one of the characters at all. He is cast for the melancholy part that will presently be called The Body. Some writers prefer to begin with The Body itself right away – after this fashion:

*"The Body was that of an elderly gentleman, upside down, but otherwise entirely dressed."*

But it seems fairer to give the elderly gentleman a few minutes of life before knocking him on the head. As long as the reader knows that there is either a Body right away, or that there is going to be one, he is satisfied.

Sometimes a touch of terror is added by having the elderly gentleman killed in a country house at night. Most readers will agree that this is the better way to kill him.

*"Sir Charles Althorpe sat alone in his library at Althorpe Chase. It was late at night. The fire had burned low in the grate. Through the heavily curtained windows no sound came from outside. Save for the maids, who slept in a distant wing, and save for the butler, whose room was under the stairs, the Chase, at this time of the year, was empty. As Sir Charles sat thus in his arm-chair, his head gradually sank upon his chest and he dozed off into slumber."*

Foolish man! Doesn't he know that to doze off into slumber in an isolated country house, with the maids in a distant wing, is little short of madness? Apparently he doesn't, and his fate, to the complete satisfaction of the reader, comes right at him.

Let it be noted that in thus setting the stage for a detective story, the Body selected is, in nine cases out of ten, that of an "elderly gentleman." It would be cowardly to kill a woman, and even our grimmest writers hesitate to kill a child. But an "elderly gentleman" is all right, especially when "fully dressed"

and half asleep. Somehow they seem to invite a knock on the head.

After such a beginning, the story ripples brightly along with the finding of the Body, and with the Inquest, and with the arrest of the janitor, or the butler, and the usual details of that sort.

Any trained reader knows when he sees that trick phrase, "*save for the janitor, who lived in the basement,*" or "*save for the butler, whose room was under the stairs,*" that the janitor and the butler are to be arrested at once.

Not that they really did commit the murder. We don't believe they did. But they are suspected. And a good writer in the outset of a crime story throws suspicion around like pepper.

In fact, the janitor and the butler are not the only ones. There is also, in all the stories, a sort of Half Hero (he can't be a whole hero, because that would interfere with the Great Detective), who is partly suspected, and sometimes even arrested. He is the young man who is either heir to the money in the story, or who had a "violent quarrel" with the Body, or who was seen "leaving the premises at a late hour" and refuses to say why.

Some writers are even mean enough to throw a little suspicion on the Heroine – the niece or ward of the elderly gentleman – a needless young woman dragged in by convention into this kind of novel. She gets suspected merely because she bought half a gallon of arsenic at the local chemist shop. They won't believe her when she says, with tears in her eyes, that she wanted it to water the tulips with.

The Body being thus completely dead, Inspector Higginbottom of the local police having been called in, having questioned all the maids, and having announced himself "completely baffled," the crime story is well set and the Great Detective is brought into it.

Here, at once, the writer is confronted with the problem of how to tell the story, and whether to write it as if it were told by the Great Detective himself. But the Great Detective is above that. For one thing, he's too silent. And in any case, if he told the story himself, his modesty might hold him back from fully explaining how terribly clever he is, and how wonderful his deductions are.

So the nearly universal method has come to be that the story is told through the mouth of an Inferior Person, a friend and confidant of the Great Detective. This humble associate has the special function of being lost in admiration all the time.

In fact, this friend, taken at his own face value, must be regarded as a Poor Nut. Witness the way in which his brain breaks down utterly and is set going again by the Great Detective. The scene occurs when the Great Detective begins to observe all the things around the place that were overlooked by Inspector Higginbottom.

*"'But how,' I exclaimed, 'how in the name of all that is incomprehensible, are you able to aver that the criminal wore rubbers?'*

*"My friend smiled quietly.*

*"'You observe,' he said, 'that patch of fresh mud about ten feet square in front of the door of the house. If you would look, you will see that it has been freshly walked over by a man with rubbers on.'*

*"I looked. The marks of the rubbers were there plain enough – at least a dozen of them.*

*"'What a fool I was!' I exclaimed. 'But at least tell me how you were able to know the length of the criminal's foot?'*

*"My friend smiled again, his same inscrutable smile.*

*"'By measuring the print of the rubber,' he answered quietly, 'and then subtracting from it the thickness of the material multiplied by two.'*

*"'Multiplied by two!' I exclaimed. 'Why by two?'*

*"'For the toe and the heel.'*

*"'Idiot that I am,' I cried, 'it all seems so plain when you explain it.'"*

In other words, the Poor Nut makes an admirable narrator. However much fogged the reader may get, he has at least the comfort of knowing that the Nut is far more fogged than he is. Indeed, the Nut may be said, in a way, to personify the ideal reader, that is to say the stupidest – the reader who is most completely bamboozled with the mystery, and yet intensely interested.

Such a reader has the support of knowing that the police are entirely "baffled" – that's always the word for them; that the public are "mystified"; that the authorities are "alarmed"; the newspapers "in the dark"; and the Poor Nut, altogether up a tree. On those terms, the reader can enjoy his own ignorance to the full.

A first-class insoluble crime having thus been well started, and with the Poor Nut narrating it with his ingenuous interest, the next stage in the mechanism of the story is to bring out the

personality of the Great Detective, and to show how terribly clever he is.

II

When a detective story gets well started – when the "body" has been duly found – and the "butler" or the "janitor" has been arrested – when the police have been completely 'baffled" – then is the time when the Great Detective is brought in and gets to work.

But before he can work at all, or at least be made thoroughly satisfactory to the up-to-date reader, it is necessary to touch him up. He can be made extremely tall and extremely thin, or even "cadaverous." Why a cadaverous man can solve a mystery better than a fat man it is hard to say; presumably the thinner a man is, the more acute is his mind. At any rate, the old school of writers preferred to have their detectives lean. This incidentally gave the detective a face "like a hawk," the writer not realizing that a hawk is one of the stupidest of animals. A detective with a face like an orang-outang would beat it all to bits.

Indeed, the Great Detective's face becomes even more important than his body. Here there is absolute unanimity. His face has to be "inscrutable." Look at it though you will, you can never read it. Contrast it, for example, with the face of Inspector Higginbottom, of the local police force. Here is a face that can look "surprised," or "relieved," or, with great ease, "completely baffled."

But the face of the Great Detective knows of no such changes. No wonder the Poor Nut, as we may call the person who is supposed to narrate the story, is completely mystified. From the face of the great man you can't tell whether the cart in which they are driving jolts him or whether the food at the Inn gives him indigestion.

To the Great Detective's face there used to be added the old-time expedient of not allowing him either to eat or drink. And when it was added that during this same period of about eight days the sleuth never slept, the reader could realize in what fine shape his brain would be for working out his "inexorable chain of logic."

But nowadays this is changed. The Great Detective not only eats, but he eats well. Often he is presented as a connoisseur in food. Thus:

*" 'Stop a bit,' thus speaks the Great Detective to the Poor Nut and Inspector Higginbottom, whom he is dragging around with*

*him as usual; 'we have half an hour before the train leaves Paddington. Let us have some dinner. I know an Italian restaurant near here where they serve frogs' legs à la Marengo better than anywhere else in London.'*

*"A few minutes later we were seated at one of the tables of a dingy little eating-place whose signboard with the words 'Restauranto Italiano' led me to the deduction that it was an Italian restaurant. I was amazed to observe that my friend was evidently well known in the place, while his order for 'three glasses of Chianti with two drops of vermicelli in each,' called for an obsequious bow from the appreciative padrone. I realized that this amazing man knew as much of the finesse of Italian wines as he did of playing the saxophone."*

We may go further. In many up-to-date cases the detective not only gets plenty to eat, but a liberal allowance of strong drink. One generous British author of to-day is never tired of handing out to the Great Detective and his friends what he calls a "stiff whiskey and soda." At all moments of crisis they get one.

For example, when they find the Body of Sir Charles Althorpe, late owner of Althorpe Chase, a terrible sight, lying on the floor of the library, what do they do? They reach at once to the sideboard and pour themselves out a "stiff whiskey and soda." Or when the heroine learns that her guardian Sir Charles is dead and that she is his heiress and when she is about to faint, what do they do? They immediately pour "a stiff whiskey and soda" into her. It is certainly a great method.

But in the main we may say that all this stuff about eating and drinking has lost its importance. The great detective has to be made exceptional by some other method.

And here is where his music comes in. It transpires – not at once but in the first pause in the story – that this great man not only can solve a crime, but has the most extraordinary aptitude for music, especially for dreamy music of the most difficult kind. As soon as he is left in the Inn room with the Poor Nut out comes his saxophone and he tunes it up.

*"'What were you playing?' I asked, as my friend at last folded his beloved instrument into its case.*

*"'Beethoven's Sonata in Q,' he answered modestly.*

*"'Good Heavens!' I exclaimed."*

Another popular method of making the Great Detective a striking character is to show him as possessing a strange and varied range of knowledge. For example, the Poor Nut is talking

with a third person, the Great Detective being apparently sunk in reveries. In the course of the conversation the name of Constantinople is mentioned.

*"I was hardly aware that my friend was hearing what was said. "He looked up quietly.*

*" 'Constantinople?' he said. 'That was the capital of Turkey, was it not?'*

*"I could not help marveling again how this strange being could have acquired his minute and varied knowledge."*

The Great Detective's personality having been thus arranged, he is brought along with the Poor Nut and Inspector Higginbottom to Althorpe Chase and it is now up to him to start to "solve" the mystery. Till a little while ago, the favorite way of having him do this was by means of tracks, footprints, and other traces. This method, which has now worn threadbare, had a tremendous vogue. According to it, the Great Detective never questioned anybody.

But his real work was done right at the scene of the crime, crawling round on the carpet of the library, and wriggling about on the grass outside. After he has got up after two days of crawling, with a broken blade of grass, he would sit down on a stone and play the saxophone and then announce that the mystery is solved and tell Inspector Higginbottom whom to arrest. That was all. He would not explain anything but what the Poor Nut, half crazy with mystification, begged him to do.

*" 'The case,' he at last explained very airily, 'has been a simple one, but not without its features of interest.'*

*" 'Simple!' I exclaimed.*

*" 'Precisely,' said he; 'you see this blade of grass. You tell me that you see nothing. Look at it again under this lense. What do you see? The letters ACK clearly stamped, but in reverse, on the soft green of the grass. What do they mean?"*

*" 'Nothing,' I groaned.*

*" 'You are wrong,' he said, 'they are the last three letters of the word DACK, the name of a well-known shoemaker in Market Croydon four miles west of the Chase.'*

*" 'Good Heavens,' I said.*

*" 'Now look at this soft piece of mud which I have baked and which carries a similar stamp,—ILTON.'*

*" 'Ilton, Ilton,' I repeated, 'I fear it means less than ever.'*

*" 'To you,' he said. 'Because you do not observe. Did you*

*never note that makers of trousers nowadays stamp their trouser buttons with their names. These letters are the concluding part of the name BILTON, one of the best-known tailors of Kings Croft, four miles east of the Chase.'*

*"'Good Heavens!' I cried, 'I begin to see.'*

*"'Do you?' he said drily. 'Then no doubt you can piece together the analysis. Our criminal is wearing a pair of trousers, bought in King's Croft, and a shoe bought in Market Croydon. What do you infer as to where he lives?'*

*"'Good Heavens,' I said, 'I begin to see it!'*

*"'Exactly,' said the Great Detective. 'He lives halfway between the two!'*

*"'At the Chase itself!' I cried. 'What a fool I have been.'*

*"'You have,' he answered quietly."*

. . . . .

But unfortunately the public has begun to find this method of traces and tracks a "bit thick." All these fond old literary fictions are crumbling away.

### THE METHOD OF RECONDITE KNOWLEDGE

In fact, they are being very largely replaced by the newer and much more showy expedient that can be called the Method of Recondite Knowledge. The Great Detective is equipped with a sort of super-scientific knowledge of things, materials, substances, chemistry, actions, and reactions that would give him a Ph.D. degree in any school of applied science.

Some of the best detectives of the higher fiction of to-day even maintain a laboratory and a couple of assistants. When they have this, all they need is a little piece of dust or a couple of micrometer sections and the criminal is as good as caught.

Thus, let us suppose that in the present instance Sir Charles Althorpe has been done to death – as so many "elderly gentlemen" were in the fiction of twenty years ago – by the intrusion into his library of a sailor with a wooden leg newly landed from Java. Formerly the crime would have been traced by the top heaviness of his wooden leg – when the man drank beer at the Althorpe Arms, his elbow on the side away from his leg would have left an impression on the bar, similar to the one left where he climbed the window sill.

But in the newer type of story the few grains of dust found near the Body would turn out to be specks from the fiber of

Java cocoanut, such as is seen only on the decks of ships newly arrived from Java, and on the clothes of the sailors.

But, by the one method or the other method, the "inexorable chain of logic" can be completed to the last link. The writer can't go on forever; sooner or later he must own up and say who did it. After two hundred pages, he finds himself up against the brutal necessity of selecting his actual murderer.

So, now then, who did it? Which brings us to the final phase of the Detective Story. Who really killed Sir Charles?

### III

### THE TRAMP SOLUTION

According to one very simple expedient, the murder was not committed by any of the principal characters at all. It was committed *by a tramp*. It transpires that the tramp was passing the Chase late that night and was attracted by the light behind the curtain (as tramps are apt to be), and came and peered through the window (as tramps love to do), and when he saw Sir Charles asleep in his chair with the gold watch on the table beside him, he got one of those sudden impulses (such as tramps get when they see a gold watch), and, before he knew what he had done, he had lifted the window and slipped into the room.

Sir Charles woke – and there you are. All quite simple. Indeed, but for the telltale marks on the grass, or the telltale fiber on the carpet, or the telltale something, the murderer would never have been known.

And yet the solution seems paltry. It seems a shame to drag in the poor tattered creature at the very end and introduce and hang him all in one page.

So we have to look round for some other plan.

### THE MURDER WAS COMMITTED BY SOMEBODY ELSE ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT

A solution, which is a prime favorite with at least one very distinguished contemporary author, is to have it turn out that the murderer has been *committed by somebody else altogether different*. In other words, it was committed by some casual person who just came into the story for about half a second.

Let us make up a simple example. At the Althorpe Arms Inn where the Great Detective and the Poor Nut are staying while they investigate the death of Sir Charles, we bring in, just for one minute, *"a burly-looking man in a check suit drinking a*

*glass of ale in the bar.*" We ask him quite casually, if he can tell us anything about the state of the road to Farringham. He answers in a surly way that he's a stranger to these parts and knows nothing of it. That's all. He doesn't come in any more till the very end.

But a really experienced reader ought to guess at once that he committed the murder. Look at it: he's burly; and he's surly; and he has a check suit; and he drinks ale; and he's a stranger; that's enough. Any good law court could hang him for that – in a detective story, anyway.

When at last the truth dawns on the Poor Nut.

*"'Great Heavens,' I exclaimed, 'the man in the check suit?'*

*"The Great Detective nodded.*

*"'But how on earth!' I exclaimed, more mystified than ever, 'were you ever led to suspect it?'*

*"'From the very first,' said my friend, turning to Inspector Higginbottom, who nodded in confirmation, 'we had a strong clew.'*

*"'A clew!' I exclaimed.*

*"'Yes, one of the checks on his coat had been cached.'*

*"'Cashed,' I cried.*

*"'You misunderstand me; not "cashed," CACHED. He had cut it out and hidden it. A man who cuts out part of his coat and hides it on the day after a crime is probably concealing something.'*

*"'Great Heavens!' I exclaimed, 'how obvious it sounds when you put it that way. To think that I never thought of it!'"*

### THE SOLUTION OF THE THOROUGHLY DANGEROUS WOMAN

According to this method, the crime was committed by a thoroughly bad, thoroughly dangerous woman, generally half foreign – which is supposed to account for a lot. She has just come into the story casually – as a nurse, or as an assistant book-keeper, or, more usual and much better, as a "discarded flame" of somebody or other.

These discarded flames flicker all through detective literature as a terrible warning to persons of a fickle disposition. In any case, great reliance is placed on foreign blood as accounting for her. For Anglo-Saxon readers, if you put a proper quantity of foreign blood into a nurse and then discard her, that will do the trick every time.

To show how thoroughly bad she is, the Dangerous Woman used to be introduced by the writers of the Victorian age as

smoking a cigarette. She also wore "high-heeled shoes and a skirt that reached barely to her ankles." In our time, she would have to do a little better than that. In short, as the key to a murder, we must pass her by. She would get acquitted every time.

Let us try something else.

### THE SOLUTION THAT THE MURDER WAS COMMITTED BY BLUE EDWARD

According to this explanation of the mysterious crime, it turns out, right at the end of the story, that the murder was not done by any of the people suspected – neither by the Butler, nor the Half Hero, nor the Tramp, nor the Dangerous Woman. Not at all. It was the work of one of the most audacious criminals ever heard of (except that the reader never heard of him till this second), the head and brain of a whole gang of criminals, ramifying all over Hades.

This head criminal generally goes under some such terrible name as Black Pete, or Yellow Charlie, or Blue Edward. As soon as his name is mentioned, then at once not only the Great Detective but everybody else knows all about him – except only the reader and the Nut, who is always used as a proxy for the reader in matters of astonishment or simplicity of mind.

At the very height of the chase, a new murder, that of a deputy police inspector (they come cheap; it's not like killing one of the regular characters), is added to the main crime of killing Sir Charles. The manner of the murder – by means of a dropping bullet fired three miles away with its trajectory computed by algebra – has led to the arrest. The Great Detective, *calculating back the path of the bullet,* has ordered by telephone the arrest of a man three miles away. As the Detective, the Nut, and the police stand looking at the body of the murdered policeman, word comes from Scotland Yard that the arrest is made:

*"The Great Detective stood looking about him, quietly shaking his head. His eye rested a moment on the prostrate body of Sub-Inspector Bradshaw, then turned to scrutinize the neat hole drilled in the glass of the window.*

*"'I see it all now,' he murmured. 'I should have guessed it sooner. There is no doubt whose work this is.'*

*"'Who is it?' I asked.*

*"'Blue Edward,' he announced quietly.*

*"'Blue Edward!' I exclaimed.*

*"'Blue Edward,' he repeated.*

*"'Blue Edward!' I reiterated, 'but who then is Blue Edward?'"*

. . . . .

This, of course, is the very question that the reader is wanting to ask. Who on earth is Blue Edward? The question is answered at once by the Great Detective himself.

*" 'The fact that you have never heard of Blue Edward merely shows the world that you have lived in. As a matter of fact, Blue Edward is the terror of four continents. We have traced him to Shanghai, only to find him in Madagascar. It was he who organized the terrible robbery at Irkutsk in which ten mujiks were blown up with a bottle of Epsom salts.*

*" 'It was Blue Edward who for years held the whole of Philadelphia in abject terror, and kept Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on the jump for even longer. At the head of a gang of criminals that ramifies all over the known globe, equipped with a scientific education that enables him to read and write and use a typewriter with the greatest ease, Blue Edward has practically held the police of the world at bay for years.*

*" 'I suspected his hand in this from the start. From the very outset, certain evidences pointed to the work of Blue Edward.' "*

After which all the police inspectors and spectators keep shaking their heads and murmuring, "Blue Edward, Blue Edward," until the reader is sufficiently impressed.

IV

The writing of a detective story, without a doubt, gets harder and harder toward the end. It is not merely the difficulty of finding a suitable criminal; there is added the difficulty of knowing what to do with him. It is a tradition of three centuries of novel writing that a story ought to end happily. But in this case, how end up happily?

For example, here we have Blue Edward, caught at last, with handcuffs on his wrists – Blue Edward, the most dangerous criminal that ever interwove the underworld into a solid mesh; Blue Edward, who – well, in fact, the whole aim of the writer only a little while before was to show what a heller Blue Edward was. True, we never heard of him until near the end of the book, but when he *did* get in we were told that his Gang had ramified all the way from Sicily to Oklahoma. Now, what are we to do?

If it is not Blue Edward, then we've got to hang the Tramp – the poor tattered creature who fried potatoes by the hedge. But we are called upon to notice that now he has "a singularly

vacant eye." You can hardly hang a man with a vacant eye. It doesn't do.

What if we send him to prison for life? But that's pretty cold stuff, too – sitting looking at four stone walls with a vacant eye for forty years. In fact, the more we think of it, the less satisfied we are with hanging the Tramp. Personally I'd rather hang Meadows the Butler, as we first set out to do, or I'd hang the Nut or the Thoroughly Bad Woman, or any of them.

In the older fiction, they used to face this problem fairly and squarely. They hanged them – and apparently they liked it. But nowadays we can't do it. We have lost the old-fashioned solid satisfaction in it, so we have to look round for another solution. Here is one, a very favorite one with our sensitive generation. If I had to give it a name, I would call it——

THE CRIMINAL WITH THE HACKING COUGH

The method of it is very simple. Blue Edward, or whoever is to be "it," is duly caught. There's no doubt of his guilt. But at the moment when the Great Detective and the Ignorant Police are examining him he develops a "hacking cough." Indeed, as he starts to make his confession, he can hardly talk for hacks.

*" 'Well,' says the criminal, looking round at the little group of police officers, 'the game is up – hack! hack! – and I may as well make a clean breast of it – hack, hack, hack.' "*

Any trained reader when he hears these hacks knows exactly what they are to lead up to. The criminal, robust though he seemed only a chapter ago when he jumped through a three-story window after throttling Sub-Inspector Juggins half to death, is a dying man. He has got one of those terrible diseases known to fiction as a "mortal complaint." It wouldn't do to give it an exact name, or somebody mught get busy and cure it. The symptoms are a hacking cough and a great mildness of manner, an absence of all profanity, and a tendency to call everybody "you gentlemen." Those things spell finis.

In fact, all that is needed now is for the Great Detective himself to say, "*Gentlemen*" (they are all gentlemen at this stage of the story), "*a higher conviction than any earthly law has, et cetera, et cetera.*" With that, the curtain is dropped, and it is understood that the criminal made his exit the same night.

That's better, decidedly better. And yet, lacking in cheerfulness, somehow.

It is just about as difficult to deal with the Thoroughly Bad Woman. The general procedure is to make her raise a terrible scene. When she is at last rounded up and caught, she doesn't "go quietly" like the criminal with the hacking cough or the repentant tramp. Not at all. She raises – in fact, she is made to raise so much that the reader will be content to waive any prejudice about the disposition of criminals, to get her out of the story.

*"The woman's face as Inspector Higginbottom snapped the handcuffs on her wrists was livid with fury.*
*" 'Gur-r-r-r-r-r!' she hissed."*

(This was her favorite exclamation and shows the high percentage of her foreign blood.)

*" 'Gu-r-r-r-r! I hate you all. Do what you like with me. I would kill him again a thousand times, the old fool.'*
*"She turned furiously towards my friend (the Great Detecitve).*
*" 'As for you,' she said, 'I hate you. Gur-r-r! See, I spit at you. Gur-r-r-r!' "*

In that way, the Great Detective gets his, though, of course, his impassive face never showed a sign. Spitting on him doesn't faze him. Then she turns on the Heroine and gives her what's coming to her.

*" 'And you! Gur-r-r! I despise you, with your baby face! Gur-r-r! And now you think you will marry him! I laugh at you! Ha! Ha! Hahula!' "*

And after that she turns on the Nut and gives him some, and then some for Inspector Higginbottom, and thus with three "Gur-r-r's" for everybody and a "Ha! ha!" as a tiger, off she goes.

. . . . .

But, take it which way you will, the ending is never satisfactory. Not even the glad news that the Heroine sank into the Poor Nut's arms, never to leave them again, can relieve the situation. Not even the knowledge that they erected a handsome memorial to Sir Charles, or that the Great Detective played the saxophone for a week can quite compensate us.

# THE EPILOGUE OF THIS BOOK: AN ELEGY NEAR A CITY FREIGHT YARD

## ✻ *The Epilogue of This Book*

If this book has in it any general theme, it is the contrast between yesterday and to-day, between to-day and to-morrow; the contrast between the life of the past and that of the future.

Nor is the contrast in the aspect of life alone. The circumstance and setting of even Death itself have altered. As witness, what here follows:

### AN ELEGY NEAR A CITY FREIGHT YARD

The descendants of the people who were chronicled by the poet Gray, in his immortal *Elegy*, more than a century and a half ago, came out, many of them, to America. They left the country for the city. They became a part of the vast unnumbered working population of the industrial centers of the American continent. They knew no longer the drooping elms and the yew tree's shade where the turf heaved in many a moldering heap. And in their new environment the aspect and complexion even of Death for them was altered.

With it changed their Elegy and Epitaph: till now, with no thought of a parody, but only of adaptation, it may well run thus:

The factory whistles blow across the way,
  Some cattle in a freight car still I see.
The employees have finished for the day,
  And there is no one on the street but me.

Now they have lighted the electric light,
  And all the people in the stores have gone,
Except the cop on duty for the night,
  And round the corner p'rhaps a motor horn.

Save that from yonder little railway tower,
  The Switchman now often is heard complain,
When some one in a motor at this hour
  Compels him to lift up his gates again.

Here on the corner of this policeman's beat,
A Funeral Parlor Open Day and Night,
Shows where the decent people of the street
Have one by one passed out of human sight.

No morning whistle blowing six o'clock,
No morning street car clattering down the track,
No morning milkman singing round the block,
Shall call them from their funeral parlor back.

For them no more the radiator coil
Shall warm the parlor for their coming home;
No busy wife put coffee on to boil,
Nor little folks turn on the gramophone.

Yet these were boys who once could hustle hard,
Full time and overtime for six days straight
They worked in factory or railroad yard,
Or poured their pig-iron into boiler plate.

Let not the people in the upper town,
The class of supercilious social pup,
The people on the boulevards look down
On what they did because they were hard up.

The social column, social graft and pull
And all the high-class beauty parlors do,
What does it come to when the time is full?
The crematorium awaits them too.

A bang-up funeral, a motor hearse,
A write-up in the papers, lots of space,——
What good is that? These boys are none the worse
Because they only had this little place.

Some men more full of brains than you would think
Have passed perhaps this undertaker's wicket,
Who might have been elected, but for drink,
To Congress on the Democratic ticket.

Here, say, was one who had the mental range,
But for the schooling he could not afford,
To make a fortune on the Stock Exchange,
As big a man perhaps as Henry Ford.

The trouble was they never went to school,
  Or never got enough to make it tell,
Straight poverty just made each seem a fool,
  And sort of paralyzed his brains as well.

Of course, you take it on the other hand,
  The very ignorance that made them fail,
The very things they didn't understand,
  Combined, perhaps, to keep them out of jail.

. . . . .

I'd like to add my epitaph to theirs,
  Just as Gray did with his to glory 'em,
And promise when I settle my affairs
  To join them in their crematorium.

FINIS

## THE AUTHOR

Stephen Leacock was born in 1869 at Swanmore in Hampshire, England. In 1876 the family emigrated to Canada and settled on a farm near Lake Simcoe. Educated at Upper Canada College and the University of Toronto, Stephen Leacock taught first at his old school, Upper Canada, and later at McGill University in Montreal, where he rose to be head of the department of economics and political science. His first writings dealt with economics and Canadian history, but gradually as his true genius emerged he grew further and further away from this field and was attracted into his natural element of pure fun. Now he is remembered mainly as a humorist and the author of close to forty books of nonsense, including *Literary Lapses, Nonsense Novels, Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town, Behind the Beyond, Moonbeams From the Larger Lunacy, Frenzied Fiction, Short Circuits, Helements of Hickonomics, Our British Empire, Over the Footlights,* and *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich.* At the time of his death in 1944, Leacock left four completed chapters of what was to have been his autobiography. These were published posthumously under the title *The Boy I Left Behind Me.* In 1946 it was decided by the Leacock Society to present a silver medal annually to the best book of humour published in Canada during the year. The Leacock Medal has become one of the outstanding awards in the literary world.

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